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MEMOIRS

OF

BARON STOCKMAR

VOL. I.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
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MEMOIRS

OF

BARON STOCKMAR.

BY HIS SON

BARON E. VON STOCKMAR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY G. A. M.

EDITED BY

F. MAX MÜLLER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

My personal acquaintance with the late Baron Stockmar was but slight. I met him now and then in Bunsen's house, and I saw him once more in his own house at Coburg, after he had withdrawn from active life. He was loved and revered, however, by those whom I loved and revered, and knowing how important a part he had taken in some of the greatest political transactions of our time, and how his judgment continued to be valued to the last by the sovereigns and statesmen of Europe; seeing also how, though he lived at Courts, he preserved through life the noble bearing of a man who values his independence and his sense of duty and honour more highly

than the richest rewards and the highest distinctions, I always felt for him a sincere admiration, mixed with a certain curiosity as to the somewhat mysterious nature of his political antecedents.

When, therefore, I heard of the publication of his Memoirs, I looked forward, not only to an interesting study of character, but also to an important contribution to our knowledge of the secret springs of European policy, during the last fifty years.

As soon as the book appeared, I read it, and with unflagging interest. It was as if the canvas of the last fifty years was unrolled again; and such was the light and life of some of the scenes depicted by Stockmar, that one forgot almost that it was a picture only, and fancied oneself once more in the midst of the excitement of 1830, 1848, 1851, and 1853.

I shall not disguise a certain disappointment at not finding more of the inner life of the man, who in his Memoirs tells us, in his own quiet

and modest way, much of what he saw and what he did in his passage through this life, but who but rarely lets us see all that he thought and felt. There is, in fact, a curious mixture of frankness and reticence in what has been published from his papers in the volume now before us; and grateful as the historian may well be for the important materials now rendered accessible, it is difficult to suppress a feeling of regret, that Stockmar should not, at the eve of his life, have found the leisure to write himself what his son has so appropriately called *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 'things worthy to be remembered and to be pondered on.' It is clear also that his son, in weaving together the fragments from his father's note-books and correspondence into a kind of historical biography, has not published all that he might have published. At the end of the sketch of his father's life, he says: 'My father was content to remain always half-hidden before the eyes of posterity. Faithful to his spirit, this book also lifts the veil but a little.'

It must, indeed, have been a difficult task for a son who, before all, wished to fulfil a filial duty, and to place before the historian a portrait of his great father, such as he really was, to decide in every case what ought to be made public, and what, for various reasons, ought to be suppressed. It has been said that, in one or two cases, the feelings of those who still survive might have been more fully considered, and it is not difficult to see, for instance, that none of the Courts in which Stockmar's life was passed, the Courts of Saxe-Coburg, Belgium, England, and Prussia, has been consulted, or allowed to exercise any censorship on the volume now before us. In the eyes of readers who care for complete historical truth, this fact will raise the value of the book immensely; while those who for a moment may have felt pained by the sudden glare of history breaking in on names and places which to their hearts are sacred, may ask themselves, with a just pride, 'Is there any Court in Europe

that could have borne the full light of history, like ours?' After all, history cannot begin too soon, and there cannot be a better lesson to living sovereigns and statesmen than to have a presentiment of the difference between the voice of history, and the voice of flatterers and political partisans. Like everything else, history travels faster in our days than formerly, when two or even three centuries had to elapse before it was considered safe to publish state papers, and when statesmen and diplomatists required at least two generations to have passed away before their memoirs should see the light. With us, the events of 1830 and 1848 belong completely to the past, the controversies roused by the *coup d'état* of 1851 are settled, and the Crimean War has found an historian such as few other wars have met with. It is not to be denied, however, that, in England particularly, Past and Present are closely united; nor shall I feel surprised if some of the events, which are here treated as if be-

longing already to the quiet domain of the historian, gave rise to new controversies in the arena of contemporary politics.

Stockmar's position was certainly an exceptional one, and it required an exceptional character to fill it as he did. There is no recognised place on any constitutional theory, and there can be none, for 'the Friend of a King;' and it may still be in the memory of many that, at one time, the possibility, or, at all events, the constitutional character of any royal friendship, was contested. No doubt, the situation lends itself so easily to the most insidious and corrupting influences, that statesmen are fully justified in regarding it with suspicion. Yet human nature is stronger than constitutional theories; and here, as elsewhere, it may be wiser to face the dangers boldly than, by artificial means, to try to remove them. At all events, it is delightful to see, in the life of Baron Stockmar, how even the greatest difficulties may be overcome, and the strongest temptations withstood,

by men rarely gifted who are free from greed and ambition, and who like to do good for good's sake. Baron Stockmar was neither a statesman nor a diplomatist in the ordinary sense of the word; and though moving all his life in that inner circle where decisions are taken which influence the course of history; nay, though forming occasionally the very centre of that narrow circle; he never claimed credit for himself, but was content to remain through life the unknown friend and benefactor of the sovereigns whom he served. How he succeeded in holding that position against friends and foes, must be learnt from his Memoirs. The real secret of his success was his entire truthfulness in his dealings with friends and opponents, and the rare art which he possessed of telling the truth, even to kings, without giving offence.

As it might seem but natural and pardonable if, in the Memoirs now published by his son, the importance of his father's position and of his influence with the statesmen and sovereigns

of Europe had been somewhat exaggerated, a few extracts have here been put together, which will show the opinion, entertained by those most competent to judge, of Baron Stockmar's personal character and political genius.

The first passage is from the 'Early Years of H.R.H. the Prince Consort':—

Stockmar, whose name must be associated in the remembrance of all who had the happiness of knowing him during the many years of his residence at the English Court, with all that they have known of most good and true! Long, indeed, will the name of 'the Baron' live as a household word in the English palace. What member was there of the Queen's household who could not point, with grateful remembrance, to some act on his part of kind and considerate friendship? But above all, what was he to the chief objects of his care and love! Rarely has it fallen to the lot of queen or prince to be blest with so real a friend—in the best sense of that word—with so wise, so judicious, so honest a counsellor. . . . Revered and beloved by all who were brought into contact with him, deserving and enjoying the unbounded confidence, not only of the Queen and Prince, but of the leading statesmen of all parties;

employing his great influence for no selfish end, but seeking only to do good, and to be of use—there was but one feeling of sorrow when advancing years and failing health led him to think the time was come when he should withdraw from a palace where he had so long lived, the beloved and trusted friend of all beneath its roof, from the Queen on the throne to the humblest member of her household.[1]

Attached to this is a note from the Queen herself :—

The Queen, looking back with gratitude and affection to the friend of their married life, can never forget the assistance given by the Baron to the young couple in regulating their movements and general mode of life, and in directing the education of their children.[2]

King Leopold, the late King of the Belgians, wrote of Stockmar :—

Mon secrétaire privé, le baron de Stockmar, m'a été attaché de longues années ; il a été témoin des jours de mon bonheur ; plus tard, quand il plut à la Providence de m'accabler de malheurs, . . . il a été mon fidèle soutien et ami. Il a refusé tout autre sort, toute autre carrière qui lui a été offerte à

[1] Page 186. [2] Page 188.

plusieurs reprises, pour se dévouer à mon service ; et je ne nie point, qu'il est plutôt mon ami que mon serviteur.

It is easy to understand that a man so much honoured and trusted at Court, must occasionally have become the object of jealousies and dislike. Thus Lord Melbourne once remarked :—

King Leopold and Stockmar are very good and intelligent people, but I dislike very much to hear it said by my friends that I am influenced by them. We know it is not true, but still I dislike to have it said.[1]

Yet the same Lord Melbourne told the Queen :—

Stockmar is not only an excellent man, but also one of the most sensible I have ever met with.[2]

Lord Palmerston, as we are told on good authority, disliked Baron Stockmar, yet, when speaking of him, he says :—

I have never but once met a perfectly disinterested man of this kind, and that is Stockmar.[3]

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[1] Vol. i. p. 388. [2] Vol. i. p. 387. [3] Vol. i. p. 387.

He is one of the best political heads I have ever met with.[1]

Baron Bunsen called him

One of the first politicians of Germany and Europe.[2]

Lord Aberdeen said of him:

I have known men as clever, as discreet, as good, and with as much judgment; but I never knew any-one who united all these qualities as he did. He is a most remarkable man.[3]

Though Stockmar devoted his whole energies to the service of King Leopold and his niece, it would be a mistake to imagine that he was but a courtier among courtiers, or that he had no higher object in life than to serve the personal interests of his Royal friends.

Stockmar had two political ideals: first, to see Germany united under Prussia; secondly, to help to establish a unity of purpose between Germany and England. He did not live to

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[1] 'Memoirs of Baron Bunsen,' vol. ii. p. 189.
[2] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 168. [3] 'Early Years,' p. 188.

see either of these ideals realised, but he never lost his faith in the destiny of the German nation. When other statesmen had nothing but scorn for those who believed in the unity of Germany, Stockmar never doubted, and, even after the day of Olmütz, he said, 'I know the people. You march towards a great future. You will live to see it, not I—but think then of the old man.'

He was less hopeful as to a political understanding between England and Germany, on which he felt that the peace of the world, the social, intellectual, and political progress of Europe, depended. An alliance between England and Germany might have restored the natural equilibrium of Europe, making the Teutonic nations strong enough to enforce respect for public law, and to prevent every breach of the peace, whether it came from the East or the West. An alliance between England and Germany, he thought, might have prevented the Crimean War, and all its conse-

quences, the political preponderance of France in Europe, and her final collision with Germany. The one-sided alliance of England with France, as conceived by Lord Palmerston, was, in his eyes, the beginning of endless complications. It would have broken his heart, had he lived to see all its consequences: —Germany driven to look for friendships elsewhere, England driven to stand by the side of France, be her cause just or unjust, and forced by a pressure, almost too strong now for human power to resist, to prevent, by all the resources at her command, a further weakening of her ally.

The death of Prince Albert was the deathblow to Stockmar's dearest and brightest hopes. He had felt for him the pride of a father, the love of a brother, the devotion of an old and faithful servant. What others have said of the Prince Consort after his death, Stockmar said during his life, and in some of the pages now published, but written many years ago,

and never intended for publication, we see, for the first time, the true conception of the Prince's statesmanlike, nay kingly, character, traced as no other hand could ever have traced it. There is a deeper meaning and a deeper sadness than words can express in what the old man wrote after the 14th of December, 1861: '*An edifice, which, for a great and noble purpose, had been reared, with a devout sense of duty, by twenty years of laborious toil, has been shattered to its very foundations.*'

All that could be done to make the English translation of Stockmar's Memoirs worthy of the original, has been done. The task was no easy one, partly on account of the many legal and diplomatic terms which occur in the Memoirs, and which do not always admit of an exact rendering, partly on account of the style peculiar to German official papers, which frequently resist all attempts at an idiomatic reproduction. I can vouch, however, for this, that the translation is throughout accurate and faith-

ful, and that at least no pains have been spared to make it such. In the 'Life of Baron Stockmar,' at the beginning of the work, some passages have been omitted as not likely to interest the English reader. I have to thank Baron E. von Stockmar for his kindness in examining the proof-sheets of the translation, and for suggesting some corrections of the German original.

F. MAX MÜLLER.

OXFORD: *November* 1872.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE following Memoirs are only to a small extent such writings of my father's as he intended for publication. The materials employed consist principally of letters from Stockmar or to him, of diaries and other notes, which he had made solely for his own use.

According to their contents, these Memoirs, with the exception of the first three chapters, which concern the English Royal Family and the Court at Claremont, are contributions to the political history of our times. Most of the chapters refer to transactions in which my father was personally concerned, either actively or as an advantageously-placed spectator. The facts and reflections are always as far as pos-

sible given in his own words. Some of the chapters contain historically interesting communications from the papers he left, concerning circumstances beyond Stockmar's own sphere of action.

There is no unity in the composition of the book. It is a collection of fragments, which I have endeavoured to put together and explain in, I hope, a somewhat intelligible and readable form. The hidden thread connecting the greater part of these fragments, is to be found in the impression produced by the events on my father's mind. Thus the Memoirs become a portrait of the man.

Still, there are many sides of him which they do not present to view: his personality, character, and the outward circumstances of his life, as a whole, are not depicted. I have therefore prefaced them by a biographical sketch.

E. STOCKMAR.

May 1872.

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THE NAME of STOCKMAR is not a common one in Germany. According to a family tradition, we descend from a Stockmar who accompanied Gustavus Adolphus from Sweden to Saxony, and there settled. He

stood high in the confidence and favour of the King, who used to say, 'If I can lay my head in the lap of a Stockmar, I am safe.' Be this as it may, it is in Saxony that we find the first certain traces of our ancestors. Hans George Stockmar of Riestädt near Sangerhausen, in the present Prussian province of Saxony, Superintendent of Forests (Oberförster) to the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, was the father of Ernest Friedrich Stockmar, born 1722, died 1793, Landkammerrath[1] in Coburg, a well-to-do merchant and manufacturer. His son Johann Ernest Gotthelf Stockmar, born 1760, died 1825, was the father of the subject of this memoir. Johann Ernest Gotthelf was a lively, cheerful, humorous, kindly gentleman, highly educated, a lover of books, and a scientific lawyer. He passed the latter years of his life at the little town of Rodach, between Coburg and Hildburghausen, where he held the post of Justizamtmann.[2] He died suddenly whilst still in full health and vigour. A fire broke out in the house next to his. Having with great effort and difficulty succeeded in saving the strong box, containing the public monies,

[1] Literally, Counsellor of the Chamber of Provincial Finances.
[2] Literally, Bailiff of Justice.

he returned to look after his books in the back part of his house. They were already in flames, and at the sight the strong, hale man fell down dead from a stroke of apoplexy.

His wife lives in our memories as a clever, humorous woman, a lover of poetry, and given to moralise on human affairs. She liked to put her ideas into a proverbial form, and one of her favourite sayings was, 'Heaven takes care that the cow's tail shall not grow too long;' which is equivalent to the well-known expression, 'Care has been taken that the trees shall not grow into the sky.' Prince Leopold of Coburg, who had, to his great amusement, often heard this expression, was wont in later years, when hostile influences appeared to gain the upper hand, to say to our father, 'We can only comfort ourselves now with your dear mother's proverb of the cow-tail.'

Stockmar had all his life a high conception of his mother's understanding, and was fond of quoting her sayings. At the age of sixty-four, in the middle of a serious political letter, respecting the desperate condition of things in France, caused by the *coup d'état* of December 1851, he exclaimed, 'My mother would have said, "Try and make a verse out of it, that will

rhyme." She was a clever, good woman. God give her rest! She had more common sense in her little finger, than Nicholas, Louis Napoleon, Schwarzenberg, and Manteuffel have in their united heads.'

The children of this marriage were :—

1. Caroline, who married Herr Opitz, afterwards President of the Government in Coburg. She died in January 1872, in her eighty-sixth year.

2. Christian Friedrich, the subject of our memoir.

3. Friederike, still living unmarried, aged seventy-six.

4. Carl, born 1791, died at Munich in 1854, without leaving any children.

I will only give a few short characteristics of my father's brother and sisters, as I find in each one of them various traits which I see again united in my father, who, in a certain sense, gave to the family characteristics their fullest and most perfect expression.

Aunt Caroline was distinguished by great kindness of heart, a clear understanding, a reliable character, and a certain reserve of manner.

Aunt Friederike is all briskness, vivacity, and *naïveté* with a playful sparkling humour ; more youthful and fresh in her seventy-sixth year than most young girls.

The younger brother, Carl, went into business at Augsburg, and there chanced to be charged for a long time with the money affairs of Queen Hortense, Louis Napoleon's mother. Later in life he entered the service of the King of the Belgians, and till his death had the management of the King's private property. In ordinary intercourse, uncle Charles passed for a very reserved, even dry, kind of man ; but in the intimacy of private life, he was cheerful, amiable, and susceptible of fun and humour.

The elder brother, our Christian Friedrich Stockmar, was born at Coburg, August 22, 1787. Many traits given of him as a boy, are indicative of a cheerful, humorous, and sanguine temperament. His mother, with some astonishment, once heard him say, as they sat at table, whilst pointing to the plates, 'Some day I must have all this of silver ;' to which she quietly replied, 'If you can manage to get it, pray do.' The sisters relate that he was particularly fond of giving comical nicknames to people and things. The young Christian was constantly at his father's country property, and used to put himself at the head of the peasant boys in many a mad expedition. He became a passionate sportsman at an early age, and this taste

lasted till he was sixty, when it suddenly came to an end.

Having been educated as a boy at the Coburg Gymnasium, he began his university career, in 1805, at the age of eighteen, and studied medicine till 1810, at Würzburg, Erlangen, and Jena. The important effect of these studies on his moral and political views, and on the practical art of life, has been well and correctly described in two biographical sketches of Stockmar, the one by Gustave Freytag,[1] the other by an old friend, the present Councillor of Legation, Friedrich Carl Meyer.[2]

'He thus acquired,' says Meyer, 'his real science and art, which, even after he had given up their practical pursuit, yet remained for life the foundation of his scientific thought and critical action. Even later in life, as a statesman, he was fond of looking upon a crisis in political or domestic affairs, from his own medical point of view; always anxious to remove as fast as possible every pathological impediment, so that the healing moral nature might be set free, and

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[1] Christian Friedrich, Baron von Stockmar. Grenzboten, No. 31 of 1863.

[2] Preuss. Jahrbücher, 1863.

social and human laws resume their restorative power. And still more clearly, perhaps, did he show his medical antecedents, by the way in which he was able at once to recognise the existence of such social diseases or accidents, by his power of penetrating at one glance the whole man or the whole situation of things, by the help of single expressions and acts; regulating, at once, his own acts and conduct according to that diagnosis.'

Stockmar himself, in a letter of March 5, 1853, says with regard to this subject, and with reference to his later career as the confessor, intimate friend, and Mentor of persons in high political positions, 'It was a clever stroke, to have originally studied medicine; without the knowledge thus acquired, without the psychological and physiological experiences which I thus obtained, my *savoir faire* would often have gone a begging.'

In Würzburg, Meyer relates, Stockmar first made acquaintance with his Franconian countryman, Friedrich Rückert, not quite two years younger than himself, whom he was afterwards to meet again at Coburg, and make his friend for life.

Stockmar's university years coincided with the most

miserable period of the French dominion; he felt deeply the humiliation of his country, and the miserable state of German affairs. Hatred and contempt for the Confederation of the Rhine, and for the political character of the smaller German States, a yearning after the unity, power, and greatness of the Fatherland, filled, already at that time, the soul of the youth, as they afterwards inspired the man, to his latest breath. It was the time when the excited patriotism of the youth of Germany was brooding over plans for the murder of Napoleon. On one occasion such ideas were broached by some students, in the presence of Stockmar. Upon this an old Prussian officer, with whom Stockmar and his comrades used often to associate, rose up, and said most seriously, 'This is the talk of very young people; leave that alone; those who have a longer acquaintance with the world know that the rule of the French cannot last much longer. Trust to the natural course of events.' This quiet confidence made a deep impression on Stockmar; it strengthened in him the belief in the working of a moral power, as a real element in the fate of peoples, and in nationalities, as no less real forces. He remained true to this belief, and by its light he recognised the hollowness of the Napoleonic rule.

At the close of 1810, Stockmar returned to Coburg, and began to practise medicine, under the direction of his uncle, Dr. Sommer. From many indications which remain to us, we may conclude that he showed considerable talent in the way of diagnosis; though he was too young to be entirely absorbed by his vocation. A scene which he recounted forty years later to Rückert, so inspired the latter, that he gave form to his ideas in the following poem:

Luckless the lot of the leech is! Thus did a friend, who had been one,
Erewhile tell me the tale—how with himself it had fared.

After a day given up to the manifold cares of my calling,
"Surely for this," did I think, "guerdon awaits me to-night!"
Since at the ball that night would I dance (so I deemed) with my chosen.
Gaily, already, I donn'd festal attire for her sake.
Just then came from a client the message, "My wife is a dying,"
And, ere I go to the ball, thither (methought) I must go.
Thither, sighing, I hasten'd, and found that the Foe of Existence,
Sure of his vanquished prey, mocked at the science of man.
All a man *could* do, I did, conscientious; and thought, At the longest,
All will be o'er in an hour. Still I shall get to the ball.
Hours trail'd onward, and hours. There still did my duty retain me,
Claimed by the grief of the house—master's and servants' and all.

Long had I heard, as they roll'd to the ball, the great wheels of the ball guests ;
Once, I was sure by the sound, *Hers* are the wheels that go by!
Bright to my fancy her image appear'd in the blaze of the ball-room.
Seek ye me ! beautiful eyes? seek ye, or miss ye me not?
Here, through the sick room glided the anxious, questioning husband ;
Needing it sorely myself, comfort I whispered to him.
Sighing, the nightwinds fitfully wafted me gusts of dance-music,
Many a by-blown strain, lapsing away like a life !
Also, at whiles, from below did a neighbour's dog at the lone-some
Lighted casement bay, scenting the savour of death.
Thus in sad discord of sounds, and in sadder discordant emo-tions,
Night, 'twixt Life and Death, wearily wasted away.
Home as they roll'd from the ball, did the coach-wheels startle the silence:
Just as the last sound died, dead lay the woman at last.'[1]

The period from 1810–1815, which Stockmar spent at Coburg, with only such interruptions as were caused by the events of the war in 1815, is marked by his intimate and constant intercourse with Rückert, who was then living with his father, in the small Bavarian country town of Ebern, in the Baunachgrund. Both as a poet and a man, Rückert felt the want of some one whom he could

[1] Translated by Owen Meredith.

confide in and make his friend, and he therefore welcomed the lively sympathy of his old university acquaintance, who was so capable of appreciating the uncommon genius of the poet.

Of Stockmar's own position, and his sphere of activity in the period from 1812, we have a short notice in his own words:

'In the year 1812, I became town and country physician, and as such, I organised, in those great years of war, a military hospital at Coburg, over which I presided as directing physician. It was soon filled, first with French and allies, and later on with Russian sick and wounded. Hospital typhus, which everywhere followed the armies, took possession of this hospital.[1] Several deaths, among those who had come into contact with the hospital, spread such a panic among the doctors, that only one old surgeon and I had courage enough left to remain at our posts. This lasted, as far as I was concerned, till November 1813, when, after resisting the infection for more than a year, I had an attack of hospital typhus, in its most

[1] Stockmar long held it at bay, by keeping the doors and windows open, even in the cold time of the year; an idea, at that time, wholly new.

dangerous form. For three weeks I lay between life and death, and then recovered so rapidly that I was already able in January 1814 to accompany the Saxon Ducal Contingent to the Rhine, as principal physician. Arrived at Mayence, I was detached as staff surgeon of 5th Army Corps, to the hospitals, established under the direction of Stein, at Mayence, Oppenheim, Guntersblum, and Worms. Here I remained, as one of the directing physicians, until the autumn of 1814, when I returned to Coburg.'

It was during this period that Stockmar first came across Stein, and that in no friendly manner. 'The military hospital at Worms,' writes Freytag, p. 165, 'had for a long time been empty, and Stockmar as a physician, did his duty in admitting to it the wounded French prisoners. Immediately afterwards a whole stream of German wounded chanced to pour in, but the hospital was full. Stein in his wonted hasty manner blazed up, and there was an exchange of hot words, in which Stockmar in no wise lagged behind. Still this first acquaintance with Stein, left on Stockmar the impression of a very great individuality. Many years afterwards, on his way from England, he paid a visit to the great statesman, and

was astonished at the intimate acquaintance he displayed with English affairs.'

In 1815 Stockmar again accompanied the Saxon Ducal Regiment, as physician, into Alsace, whence, after the capitulation of the fortresses, he returned to Coburg and resumed his duties as town and country physician.

But he was not destined to remain there long. Prince Leopold of Coburg had in the course of the campaign become acquainted with him, and had taken a fancy to him. When the Prince's marriage with Princess Charlotte was settled, he offered Stockmar an appointment as his physician in ordinary.

On March 11, 1816, Stockmar received the definite summons of the Prince, to join him as soon as possible and enter on his functions. On the 29th he landed at Dover, and on the 30th, to avoid travelling too late at night, 'on account of highwaymen,' he only proceeded as far as Rochester; on the 31st he reached London. 'The country,' he says in his Diary, 'the houses, their arrangement, everything, especially in the neighbourhood of London, delighted me, and so raised my spirits, that I kept saying to

myself, Here you must be happy, here you cannot be ill.'

This appears to be the right place for a closer description of the young physician, whom we have brought to the threshold of an uncertain, unknown future.

Stockmar's character was a curious compound. To a straightforward understanding, which simplified all questions presented to it, a sober habit of observation, and great objectivity of apprehension, he united deep feeling, good nature, and love of mankind. For the conduct of business, he was endowed with fearless activity and courage, with acuteness, insight, and contrivance; but general considerations, and the tracing back of isolated facts to fundamental principles, were always a matter of necessity to him. At one time he astonished the observer by his sanguine, bubbling, provoking, unreserved, quick, fiery, or humorous, cheerful, even unrestrainedly gay manner, warming him by his hearty open advances, where he felt himself attracted and encouraged to confidence—at other times he was all seriousness, placidity, self-possession, cool circumspection, methodical consideration, prudence, criticism, even irony and

scepticism. These contrasts, already sufficiently startling, were still further increased by a weak physical organisation, which first seriously asserted its influence during his university career, frequently checking his aspirations and the elasticity of his mind; and developing by bodily suffering the seeds of the deepest hypochondria, which at times, and even in his early years, weighed down his spirits.

Stockmar had to contend throughout his life with dyspepsia, and, for the greater part of it, with affections of the eye. The variations in the state of his health led to fresh contrasts in his disposition and in his powers of action. If the waves returned after a long ebb-tide, and the nervous system was freed from pressure, the reaction showed itself, as is often the case with excitable temperaments, even in his later years, by an astonishing vivacity and overflowing humour. Most appropriately did one of his oldest friends, the present General von Alvensleben, in Coburg, say to him on such an occasion (they were both far above sixty), 'It is good that you are so often ill, or there would be no bearing your exuberant spirits.'

But these characteristics do not describe Stock-

mar's inmost being. I find it rather in the following qualities:

The purest love of truth, and eagerness to perceive and acknowledge it, and to see it perceived and acknowledged, and not obscured, by others; the greatest independence of opinion; and the most cheerful obedience and submission to that inner Law, which regulates human affairs. To listen for this inward Law, under all circumstances, and if he recognised it, to submit to it, without resistance, even though in opposition to his own wishes; to labour honestly and joyfully for the realisation of that Law; this was his plan of life. From this arose his fundamental position towards politics. Whilst the statesmen of Europe since 1815 followed various arbitrary aims and tendencies, arising from narrow egotism or pedantry, despotically fought against the natural bent of political circumstances, and strove to restrain or remodel the natural growth of the people by artificial arrangements, he, to his latest breath, was devoted with his whole soul to a national liberal development, and worked for it with all his powers.

His personal relations with other men rested on

the same foundation. He was not only, in the highest degree, disinterested in his own affairs, but he found a satisfaction in furthering the welfare of others, and the fulfilment of the Law in this direction also was his delight.[1] To be philanthropic and kindly disposed, to love, to be helpful, to care for the prosperity of others, was richly granted to him from this moment, throughout the whole of his career in life.

The peculiarity of his lot consisted in this, that his longest, most extended, consistent, and influential activity, in this sense, was devoted to persons in the highest positions in life—to Princes.

The truth-loving man, of independent opinions, animated by a feeling of joyful obedience to the inward Law which regulates human affairs, became the friend, confidant, counsellor, and Mentor of Princes—that is, of people, who in their high positions are but seldom approached by truth and independent opinion, and who are the most tempted to disregard the inward Law in human affairs.

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[1] He knew himself well on this point. As early as November 1817, he wrote to his sister Caroline: 'I seem to be here, to care more for others than for myself, and am well content with this destiny.'

But again his good fortune willed that Stockmar, in the various phases of his life, should be brought into contact with such Princes, as strove themselves after what was true and right, and not after mere show ; who knew how to value the purely human worth of an independent man ; who looked on themselves as the servants and instruments of a higher Law, not as the arbitrary rulers of human affairs ; and who by their mental qualities and their characters were peculiarly endowed for the fulfilment of the task imposed on them. The seed sown by Stockmar did not fall on stony barren ground.

Such a prospect for the future was, of course, still hidden to view, on Stockmar's arrival in England ; and there was still matter enough for anxiety in his position. He had given up a settled, and comparatively independent life, in the certainly small, but yet comfortable and familiar relations of his own country, for an uncertain future,[1] in the personal service of a master, in a country, the language and customs of which were unknown to him, and which to a stranger, even under the most favourable circumstances, pre-

[1] Even the material conditions of his position had not been settled beforehand.

sented great difficulties. But a friendly fate so ordered it, that he, in this manner, found a far richer lot, than he could ever have hoped for; that his master was a highly amiable and distinguished Prince, to whom the servant stood in the position of friend and confidant; that Stockmar became well acclimatised to England, and found in it an admirable school for his development.[1]

Stockmar had already gained the confidence and love of his Prince to such an extent, that Leopold, at the death-bed of his beloved wife, made him promise never to forsake him.

The further result of this was that the Prince soon engaged another physician, and Stockmar undertook the direction of the Prince's personal affairs and of his Court, as Secretary, Keeper of the Privy Purse, and

[1] The following passage from a letter of the Prince, of December 15, 1824, to a statesman to whom he wished to introduce Stockmar, will best characterise the personal relations in which the two stood to each other: 'Mon secrétaire privé, le Baron de Stockmar, m'a été attaché de longues années; il a été témoin des jours de mon bonheur; plus tard, quand il plut à la Providence de m'accabler de malheurs que je n'avais presque pas la force de supporter, il a été mon fidèle soutien et ami. Il a refusé tout autre sort, toute carrière qui lui a été offerte à plusieurs reprises, pour se dévouer à mon service, et je ne nie point qu'il est plutôt mon ami que mon serviteur.'

Comptroller of the Household; functions which he continued to exercise till the year 1831.[1]

It was in connection with this rise in the social scale that Stockmar received, at the instance of the Prince, in 1821, a patent of Saxon nobility, and that in 1831 he was raised to the rank of Baron in Bavaria, to which the title of an Austrian Baron was added in 1840.

This period was one of the greatest importance for Stockmar, by familiarising him with business in its most varied branches, and by affording him, from an advantageous position, an insight into the colossal movements of the social and political life of England. He learnt, in intercourse with manly, sober, intelligent Englishmen, a different method of appreciating and treating practical matters from the childish, petty, narrow-minded, and cumbrous way at that time in vogue in Germany, more especially in the smaller States. 'Yet,' says Freytag, 'he in no wise lost any of the warmth, kindliness, and affection which were peculiar to him, nor did he forfeit his German characteristic of shaping his actions according to the highest

[1] Chapter II. gives a full account of the life at Leopold's Court, 1816 and 1817.

standards. The noble and reverential idea of the development of the State from the character and wants of the people, his conception that the life of a nation was the life of a powerfully individualised organism, was confirmed here, by seeing the progress of a great people under a free Constitution.'

His long residence in England was broken by journeys with the Prince to France, Italy, and Germany. In August 1821, a few months before the Italian journey (1821–1822), Stockmar married his cousin, Fanny Sommer, in Coburg, and founded there a home and family,[1] in which, however, for the next thirty-six years, he was only to spend on an average six months yearly, coming there from Belgium and England, the central points of his activity. Now and then it happened that several years passed by without his seeing wife or child. It was no small sacrifice which this warm-hearted man, attached as he was to family-life, made to the circumstances of his position. For up to his seventieth year, he never enjoyed

[1] The children of this marriage are: 1. Ernst, born 1823, the author of this book; 2. Marie, born 1827, married Professor Hettner, of Dresden, died 1856; 3. Carl, born 1836.

a perfect home-life, and thus his whole existence became divided and broken.

The year 1829 brought Stockmar for the first time into personal contact with politics on a large scale, in connection with the candidature of Prince Leopold for the Greek throne. For the Prince, this candidature was not a little tempting, owing to the glory thrown over the affair by the recollections of the past, the enthusiasm which prevailed at the time, and a certain romantic yearning of his own for the South. Leopold, however, withstood all these temptations in the end, and his final refusal was influenced by a sober consideration of the real circumstances of the case.

'This led him,' says C. F. Meyer, p. 334, 'to the conviction that the geographical and political limits, which were imposed upon the new kingdom, would make it almost impossible for Greece to extricate itself from the internal confusion to which it was a prey, and still more to withdraw from the leading strings of the foreign intrigues, to which, half accidentally, it owed its birth.'

The final result of this affair, the details of which are given in Chapter V. of this work, completely tallied with these convictions.

Hardly a year had elapsed after the Greek project was definitively abandoned, when another crown, that of Belgium, was offered to the Prince. Belgium, which had revolted against the Dutch rule, owed its independence to the fear which the July Government, filled with secret longings of its own, entertained of the other European Powers; to the terror with which the France of July inspired the absolute Courts; and to the favour of the Whig Ministry, which had taken office after the fall of Wellington in 1830. Leopold obtained the throne, because, without belonging by birth to any of the great Powers, he stood in some favour both with England and Russia, and had, at an early stage of the proceedings, declared his desire to place himself on a friendly footing with France, by means of a marriage.

Stockmar's influence on the march of the negotiations, and on the decision of the Prince, before the departure of the latter from England to Brussels, was of a very marked and important character.

This influence was especially noticeable in the strict adherence of the Prince to the correct attitude of refusing to engage himself in any way to the Belgians, unless they first submitted to the Eighteen Articles,

offered by the London Conference (thus avoiding the principal mistake committed in the Greek affair). The same influence brought about the acceptance of the Constitution voted in Brussels, notwithstanding its democratic character, and the renunciation of the English annuity of 50,000*l.* secured to Leopold by Act of Parliament; an act by which the new sovereign established for himself on all sides a proper independence of position.

On July 21, 1831, Leopold made his entry into Brussels. Stockmar accompanied him, in order to organise the household and Court of the new King. But already at the commencement of August, the Dutch took advantage of the unprepared state of Belgium, and invaded the country, which was only saved by the aid of a French army.

For Stockmar, personally too, the French appeared as saviours. On August 12, not knowing the state of affairs at Liège, he drove there in a carriage from Brussels, to bring important despatches from England to the King at head-quarters. He came across a Dutch detachment, which took him prisoner, and carried him off to a farm-house in a neighbouring village. His first care was to get rid of the de-

spatches which he carried concealed about him; and having on some pretext obtained permission to go into the stable, he buried them there in the straw. On his return to the room in the farm-house he showed the Dutch officer the newspapers he had brought with him from Brussels, which announced the entry of the French as having already taken place. The officer looked serious; and just at that moment the first French troops were seen coming across a corn-field. He thereupon rapidly retreated with his men, and abandoned his prisoner, who thus probably escaped the danger of spending some years in a Dutch fortress.

The catastrophe of August was very unfavourable to the position of Belgium at the London Conference. Stockmar returned to London, in order, as the confidential agent of the King, to watch over the interests of his master and of Belgium, side by side with the official plenipotentiaries of Belgium, and in constant co-operation with them. His long familiarity with the London terrain; his personal acquaintance with some of the leading English statesmen, as Lords Grey and Palmerston; his good relations with the Prussian Minister, M. de Bülow, made

it possible for him to render services which could not, under existing circumstances, have been expected from an official agent, although Belgium happened to be represented by men so exceptionally able as Van der Weyer and Goblet.

The Belgian business continued to drag its way wearily along in the Conference. The impatience of the Belgians to have their Constitution finally settled, and the sympathy of England, were the forces which drove the matter forward. The universal fear of war assisted this onward movement, and triumphed in France over all the *arrière-pensées*. With the Northern Powers it overruled the antipathy excited by the revolutionary character of the new State, and family sympathies for the Dutch dynasty.

The first step in advance was the Treaty of November 15, 1831, by which the five Powers guaranteed the independence and neutrality of Belgium, and settled the territorial and financial conditions of the separation from Holland.

These conditions were less favourable than the former Eighteen Articles. Still Stockmar advised the acceptance of the Treaty, because it was calculated to bind the five Powers more effectually than the

relations previously in existence. But now the Northern Powers made difficulties respecting the *ratification* of the Treaty. At first, they refused altogether to ratify, and then did so under clauses and reservations. Stockmar recommended that this conditional and clause-stricken ratification should be accepted, in order to push the matter on another step. The next question was the execution of the Treaty. It left several points to be settled by means of direct negotiation between Holland and Belgium. But Holland, on her part, had not accepted the Treaty, and still occupied many parts of the territory (Antwerp for instance), which, according to the Treaty, were to fall to Belgium. On this, Belgium refused to enter into any further negotiation with Holland, until the evacuation of her territory. The whole matter came to a standstill. Holland pretended to the Powers in London, that she was perfectly ready to enter into negotiation with Belgium, and to come to an equitable arrangement; and urged the Conference, in consequence, to put off, *sine die*, the difficult task of carrying out the territorial stipulations of the Treaty. Stockmar, in conjunction with General Goblet and Van der Weyer, successfully insisted at

Brussels on a change of tactics. Belgium declared her readiness to enter into direct negotiation with Holland. It soon appeared that the latter had no serious intention of accepting the fundamental principles of the Treaty. This led to a new step in advance, inasmuch as England and France, with the Northern Powers as passive spectators, obtained the evacuation of the Belgian territory, occupied by Holland, by force. The result was an armistice between Holland and Belgium, and a *Provisorium* favourable to the latter, which lasted till the year 1839, when a definite treaty with Holland was at last agreed to.

By the forcible execution of the Treaty of November, on the part of the Western Powers, and the creation of a *Provisorium* between Belgium and Holland, the Belgian business was for the time brought safe into port, and Stockmar was able in 1833 to return to Germany and visit his family, whom he had not seen for three years.

Stockmar's faith in the vitality of the newly-created Belgium never wavered, as letters referred to in the Memoirs abundantly testify. His argument was simply this, that Belgium had in reference to dangers

coming from without, just as much chance of surviving as every other third-rate Power. The events of 1848, 1852, and 1870 proved him to have been in the right.

The many years during which he had been occupied with Belgian affairs, had given Stockmar the opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with most of the statesmen of Belgium. He was astonished at the number of able men brought to the surface in so small a country by the political excitement of the period.

He retained for Lebeau, Devaux, Nothomb, and Goblet, whose ability he always highly prized, sentiments of the truest regard, and to the day of his death counted amongst his most devoted friends, Van der Weyer, who, after the close of the London Conferences, was for thirty years Belgian Minister in London; and Van Praet, who as Minister of the Royal House remained the constant adviser of King Leopold.

He was on less intimate terms with the statesmen of the Catholic party. He had much respect for Count Felix Mérode, who was full of originality and character, and he was fond of telling

stories about him, e.g. how Mérode used to give vent to his irritation at the London fogs! 'Partout le brouillard, je découpe mon beefsteak;—sort le brouillard!' Mérode, on his side, knew how to appreciate Stockmar: 'C'est un original: mais quel honnête homme!'

We have now arrived at an important turning point in Stockmar's life. The position which he had hitherto occupied in England in Leopold's service had to cease. There were still, it is true, the arrangements in connection with the King's renunciation of his annuity, which had to be carried out; but after these had in the course of the year 1834 been wound up, there was no sphere of activity left for Stockmar in England. The idea of official employment in Belgium was often present to his mind, but he never seriously applied for it. Fortunately for him! for it is not likely that anything could have been found really suited to a nature like his, wholly unfitted as it was for ordinary official routine. Nor would the distrust and disfavour with which the foreigner is always looked upon in Belgium, have failed to light on him.

Consequently, Stockmar, properly speaking, quitted the service of the King, received a pension settled on

the English annuity, and from thenceforth remained towards his former master on a footing of free and confidential intercourse, often consulted, and frequently employed in business of more or less importance, mostly connected with family politics.

The first of these services was the conclusion of the marriage-treaty between Prince Ferdinand of Coburg and Donna Maria of Portugal, at the end of the year 1835.

The year 1836 opened to Stockmar a new and important field of activity. The approaching majority and probably not distant accession to the throne of Princess Victoria of England, engaged the vigilant and farsighted care of her uncle King Leopold. At the same time he was already making preparations for the eventual execution of a plan, which had long formed the subject of the wishes of the Coburg family, viz. the marriage of the future Queen of England with his nephew, Prince Albert of Coburg.

Stockmar was charged with the duty of standing by the Princess, as her confidential adviser, at the critical moment of her coming of age, and (possibly) her accession to the throne. In the meanwhile King Leopold consulted with him, as to the manner in

which Prince Albert should make acquaintance with his cousin, and how he should be prepared for his future vocation.

The sixteenth chapter of this work will show that both the King and Stockmar did not regard the future they desired for the Prince, merely as one of external advantage and brilliancy, but connected with it solemn and difficult claims, and from a high point of view considered the plan of previous preparation conscientiously and maturely.

Princess Victoria came of age the 24th of May, 1837, and King William IV. had been dangerously ill since the 20th. Stockmar arrived in England on the 25th, and on the 20th of June, King Leopold's niece ascended the throne. Between the 20th of May and the 20th of June the young Princess was surrounded by manifold difficulties, in overcoming which Stockmar's aid and advice were of great use.

After the Queen's accession, Stockmar continued for more than a year his noiseless, quiet activity in England, without any publicly defined position. The Queen had no private secretary; the assistance of such a person, as regarded affairs of State, was in

part replaced by Lord Melbourne, who had more frequent personal intercourse with the Queen than is usual on the part of a Premier. But he could not always be by her side, and the gap was filled by Stockmar, who supplied the means of intercourse, both verbal and written, with the Minister. For a German in England this was a highly precarious and doubtful position. That Stockmar was able to maintain it for the space of fifteen months, was rendered possible only by his abstaining from putting himself forward, and because his judgment, discretion, sense of honour, and unselfishness, inspired the English Ministers with entire confidence.

The position was all the more difficult, as he considered it to be his duty, in the interest of the Queen, and in that of the Crown, as such, to resist the Ministers, when he perceived that the latter were acting too much from mere party motives. From the very beginning he set before himself, and followed as his object, the placing the Crown above all parties, though it is true he did not altogether succeed in keeping the young Queen in this impartial attitude, till after her marriage.

When Stockmar left England in 1838, the Queen imposed a fresh task upon him.

The relations which subsisted between her and Prince Albert were still unsettled and uncertain. They had seen each other, and had corresponded, but nothing of a decisive character had yet been said. The Queen had entertained a wish for the marriage, and then again had desired a few years' delay. That she had never given up the idea, is proved by the commission, with which, in the summer of 1838, she charged Stockmar in writing, to accompany the Prince on a journey. The idea was, apart from the educational advantages involved in the journey itself, to prepare the young Prince, with whom Stockmar was till then only superficially acquainted, for his future duties, by placing him under his influence. This journey to Italy, undertaken in the years 1838 and 1839, naturally brought about a mutual intimacy. Stockmar's freshness and self-possession, his experience and geniality, cannot have failed to make an impression on the Prince; whilst on his part, Stockmar gained an insight into Albert's noble, highly-gifted nature. At that time Stockmar was still in doubt whether sufficient energy and perseverance were com-

bined with these high qualities. The circumstances under which the Prince had hitherto lived, had not as yet forced him to learn that which makes a man, a man, viz. earnest and continuous work. That he later on learnt this secret, and laboured honestly, faithfully, and incessantly, for the highest objects, he owed to his life in England, and also, in no small degree, to the continuous influence of Stockmar, which developed the excellent germs of his nature, always turned as it had been to high ideals.

On his return from Italy, the Prince went to England in October, and the engagement with the Queen soon followed. Stockmar, who had in the meantime gone to visit King Leopold at Wiesbaden, was desired to go to England some time before the marriage, which was to take place in February, in order to be at hand, and ready to assist the young Prince, by word and deed, upon his entrance on his new career.

On his arrival in England, in January 1840, he found the situation, as compared with 1838, changed for the worse. The Queen's partisanship for the Whigs, and her unconciliatory attitude towards the Tories, had displayed itself prominently in May 1839,

when the formation of the Peel Ministry had been rendered impossible through her opposition, in the so-called Ladies of the bedchamber question ; whilst in the following summer and autumn, the melancholy catastrophe of Lady Flora Hastings had still further increased the bitterness of the Tories. The Whig Ministry was, in the highest degree, weak and languishing, supported by but a fluctuating majority in Parliament, and at the same time careless and unskilful in the management of business. Its existence therefore depended, to a great extent, upon the good will of its opponents. Now this good will was entirely wanting in regard to everything connected with the Court; and the consequence was, that the various questions having reference to the regulation of the position of the future Consort of the Queen, took an unfavourable turn in Parliament. The annuity to be granted to the Prince was curtailed. The Government were obliged to withdraw that portion of the Bill of Naturalisation which was to determine the rank of the Prince, in order not to be beaten. In vain had Stockmar advised, that the Ministry should attempt to enter into confidential negotiations with the heads of the Opposition, upon a question, which as it touched

the throne, which belonged to no party, ought not to be treated as a party question. To attempt negotiations of this kind, upon his own responsibility, had seemed to him too hazardous. He did so, however, upon the next occasion of a similar kind, viz., when, upon the expected confinement of the Queen, it was necessary to provide for a Regency in the event of the death of the monarch, leaving a minor as her heir. He entered into negotiations with Peel and Wellington, and the result was, that the bill constituting the Prince, Regent, passed almost without opposition ; a precedent which thenceforth, under the influence of the Prince Consort, was universally adopted, in the treatment of all questions touching the Royal Family.

Soon after the passing of the Regency Bill, Stockmar returned to Germany, under the impression that his sphere of activity in England would now in all probability be closed for ever. Here, however, he was mistaken ; for the next seventeen years of his life were so distributed, that almost every year he made a journey to England, and as a rule spent there, the autumn, winter, and spring.

His relations with the Prince soon became of a

deep and intimate kind. In November 1840 he writes, 'I love him as if he were my own son.' And the Prince deserved such love. His mind developed more and more. An earnest sense of duty and persevering effort and labour for all the highest and noblest aims of humanity, pervaded and governed his whole life. More and more he yielded a willing, zealous, and cheerful obedience to the Divine Law, using his great internal resources and external power for carrying out the work of his exalted position.

In his relations to Stockmar the Prince appears most especially loveable. For although Stockmar's intercourse possessed a great charm, he was by no means courtly in his forms, or punctilious in matters of etiquette. On the contrary, he was very blunt, somewhat given to finding fault and seeing the black side of things, and of an unsparing openness which knew no bounds, and which he exercised even more towards the Princes whose confidence he enjoyed, than towards other men. He was, moreover, very decided and firm in his views, and very independent and prone to follow his own way, when he undertook to transact business on behalf of others. He

was, therefore, clearly no easy companion for a Prince, unless the latter possessed sufficient worth and force, to raise himself above the artificial barriers and forms which are erected between princes and ordinary mortals, and to meet man freely as man, to give himself simply as a man, and looking only to the purely human in others.

The kindness and tenderness with which the Prince cultivated his friendship for Stockmar, were the best proof of the goodness of his heart and the freedom of his intellect.

For the truly and purely human, the Queen was as accessible as the Prince. The Biography of the Prince and the Diary in the Highlands have exhibited this side of the noble lady's character, in the most amiable light, to the public at large. In fact, all who knew how to place themselves on this human footing with Stockmar, had no difficulty in gliding over the little unevennesses which intercourse with the 'old original' (to quote an expression of Bunsen's of a later date) often presented.

Stockmar was the familiar and confidential friend of the Royal Couple, who discussed everything with him, the little as well as the great, and claimed his

advice and assistance for the one as well as for the other.

'All the intellectual gifts,' says Meyer, p. 336, 'knowledge, and convictions which he had inherited or acquired, his long intimacy and intercourse with the House of Coburg, his rich experiences, medical, political, and social, his knowledge of countries, persons, and languages, his sober intellect, his considerate tact, his sprightly humour, and quick decision, his upright judgment, and warm sympathetic heart —all these qualifications were now of service to him, and were indispensable to him in a position, in which he had alternately to sit by a sick bed or at a writing table, to give advice for the cradle or the throne; now to settle a domestic or political difference or attune a discord; now to forward some charitable petition, or aid in putting down some beggar; now to propose some new teacher or governess, or receive the confession of a groom of the chamber; lastly, by cheerful and interesting conversation, to entertain and aid the intellectual growth of the Prince, and afterwards, little by little, of the Royal children.'

At the same time he was the harbour of refuge for all those who had any wish to prefer or

any complaint to make at the Court, or to the Court.[1]

The external mode of life of the Queen and the Prince, the arrangements of the Court, the personal affairs of the household, the education of the Royal children, the family arrangements of the House of Coburg, the matrimonial projects for the future—in all these matters he took a constant part, as the contents of this book will abundantly testify. As the Prince was exceedingly fond of a methodical study of political events, and of discussion upon them, Stockmar had constant opportunity of obtaining an insight, as detailed as it was comprehensive, into the great transactions of the world. On the whole he maintained an attitude of observation and contemplation, merely stimulating thought by giving expression to his reflections. The wish for what is called to have a finger in the pie, was far from him. With the well-

[1] There were not wanting instances of shamelessness against which he had to defend himself. A rich Englishman, an author, and Member of Parliament, called upon him one day and promised to give him 10,000*l.* if he would further his petition to the Queen for a peerage. Stockmar replied, 'I will now go into the next room, in order to give you time. If upon my return I still find you here, I shall have you turned out by the servants.'

ordered, strictly defined, constitutional forms of England, he would only have done harm to those, whose confidence in him gave him so exceptional a position, and would have endangered his very position. He felt called upon to exchange the part of a quiet observer for that of a quiet co-operator, only when the personal interests of the Royal families or of the Crown in England and Belgium, or the vital interests of Belgium, were called in question.

That he maintained this position, behind the scenes, at the English Court, to the last moment, without giving offence, was rendered possible by the discretion with which he avoided every appearance of putting himself forward, by his well-known unselfishness, by the independence of his nature and manner, in virtue of which he ever appeared, not as a parasite, but as a guest and a friend. To this, however, must be added an important circumstance, his personal good relations with some of the leading statesmen;—at first with Lord Grey, and then with Lords Melbourne and Palmerston, and afterwards with Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen. The accurate personal knowledge of Stockmar and of his position at Court, which these men possessed, obviated

most effectively misunderstandings which might otherwise have arisen; that is, misunderstandings in circles where they could have done harm. For in the wider circles of the half or wholly ignorant, there remained the most fanciful ideas respecting the sphere of Stockmar's activity. They cropped out also at times in the press, more especially in the free and easy English press. Between about 1839 and 1850 there frequently appeared in papers like 'the Age,' devoted to fun, scandal, and personal rancour, articles which attacked the 'intriguer Stockmar, the agent of the Jesuit Leopold.' For such attacks he had the skin of a rhinoceros. He knew, it is true, that in the dark, heavy, uncritical mass, *semper aliquid hæret.* But he was satisfied with the recognition of the few, and was wont to chuckle at the foolish impressions of the many. There was something of the Mephistophelian enjoyment which the man really behind the scenes experiences, in watching the uninitiated puffing themselves out with their supposed knowledge.

Stockmar's external life in England was tolerably uniform and quiet. Before the marriage of the Queen, he did not, as a rule, live at the Palace. After that

period, rooms were set apart for him in Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, and Osborne, and he used to accompany the Court from one residence to another. He had little intercourse with any circles but those of the Court. Amongst his personal friends he reckoned from the olden days of Claremont, Sir Edward Cust, and Gen. Sir Robert Gardiner; in later times Bunsen, the Prussian Minister, Van der Weyer, the Belgian Minister, Sir James Clark, the Queen's physician, Sir George Couper, Equerry to the Duchess of Kent. These friends, as well as the more numerous, so to speak, political friends of Stockmar, came oftener to him than he went to them. In the Household itself, the then Comptroller of the Household, Sir Thomas Biddulph, Sir Charles Phipps, General Grey, and the German Secretaries of Prince Albert, Prätorius, succeeded towards 1850 by Friedrich Carl Meyer, now Councillor of Legation at Berlin, were his more intimate friends; Prätorius,[1] who ever jealously

[1] Prätorius was not a good-looking man. The Queen was once reading the Bible with her daughter, the little Princess Victoria; they came to the passage, 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.' Upon which the child, gifted with an early sense of beauty, exclaimed, 'But, Mámma, surely not Dr. Prätorius.'

strengthened the Prince's inclinations in the sense which Stockmar desired, and always insisted upon the highest moral considerations ; Meyer, whose rich and soaring intellect was always full of suggestion and information.

A passage in Meyer's Memoir, p. 334, gives us an insight into the habits of the Royal Family towards the year 1850 :

'Usually towards evening, returning from a ride, or from the transaction of business, his arms full of papers and despatch boxes, the Prince used to burst into the room of the Baron, with the cheerful impetuosity peculiar to him,[1] and throw himself upon the sofa, to rest, whilst the old friend listened wistfully at first to his questions and reports, and then would himself, whilst walking up and down the room, take to recounting, in sparkling fulness, a mass of experiences, anecdotes, and remarks, principally out of his own life. Of the wealth with which the mind of the Prince was furnished, of the forms in which, and the principles according to which, he thought, how

[1] The amount of business which the Prince gradually undertook, was so great, that he had adopted the quickest movements, even in traversing the long corridors of the palace.

much may have been implanted in him by such intercourse, and how much may yet live on at the present day, as an echo from across the two graves, in the minds of the Royal children!'

These, too, and more especially the two elder ones, the Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales, were fond of finding their way to the room of the Baron, as he was simply called at the English Court. Here they were free from the supervision of the tutor or the governess, and talked unrestrainedly with the old friend, who delighted in the quick understanding of the marvellously intelligent little Princess, and the merry nature of her brother.

Stockmar took Court life very easily. His greatest exertion in this respect consisted in joining the Royal dinner-table, when the Queen dined—and even on these occasions he, being chilly from bad health, was privileged to wear trowsers instead of the official 'shorts,' which were ill suited to his thin legs. When the Queen had risen from table, and after holding a circle, had sat down again to tea, Stockmar would generally be seen walking straight through the drawing-room and retiring to his apartment, there to study his own comfort. That he should

sacrifice the latter to etiquette, was not expected of him, as for months together he was a guest in the house, and his exceptional position was so well recognised, that these deviations from courtly usage did not give offence, even in public.

When the spring came, Stockmar suddenly disappeared. He hated taking leave, and his room would some fine morning be found empty. Then letters would follow him to Coburg, complaining of his faithlessness, and the summer generally brought requests that he would soon return.

The events of 1848 induced Stockmar, for a considerable time, to change the sphere of his activity and observation from England to Germany. Here, too, he remained almost entirely behind the scenes, and, a few newspaper articles which he wrote excepted, he confined himself to exercising his influence confidentially in a small circle.

As early as 1847, he had foreseen great convulsions in Europe. The Anglo-French conflict with regard to the Spanish marriages, had, in his opinion, shaken the throne of Louis Philippe, by driving both the internal and external policy of the July King more and more into false courses, or maintaining them in

those already chosen. The summoning of the Prussian United Diet also, seemed to him as certain to lead to further consequences.

When the storms of February and March broke out, he was in Germany. His whole interest was now concentrated on the reorganisation of Germany. The shame and misery of the disunion of the Fatherland had never ceased to be present to his mind since the days of the French occupation and of the Confederation of the Rhine, and he never doubted that the object to be aimed at must be the union of Germany under Prussia. And it should be noticed that this last conviction arose solely from his political instinct and insight. His course in life had, up to this time, as we have seen, hardly brought him into contact with Prussian affairs, let alone any nearer acquaintance, or personal participation in them. He pictured this union to himself as, at first, federative, but in its further development as the consolidation of Germany in one State.

The point with him, therefore, was to find out a way in which the transition from the federative to the united and consolidated form of government could be easily and quietly effected. A plan drawn up

from this point of view was directly communicated by him, as early as May, to the King of Prussia, with whom he had had the opportunity of becoming more closely acquainted, on the occasion of Frederick William's visit to England, for the christening of the Prince of Wales.

This plan still possesses interest at the present day, as an attempt to solve the problem, how difficulties, which flow from the concurrent legislation of Prussian Chambers and an Imperial Parliament, of a Prussian and an Imperial Administration, are to be avoided.

The pith of the proposal consisted in the difference to be established between Immediate and Mediate territories; the former to be placed in every respect under the Empire, the Imperial Crown, the Imperial Legislature, and the Imperial Administration; the latter to be placed under the Empire, only in regard to such matters as must necessarily be subordinated to the Central Power of a Confederated State. First of all, Prussia was to be the 'immediate' dependency of the Empire, in which she would have been consequently absorbed. As regards the other States, Stockmar hoped that they would gradually follow the example of Prussia.

For the realisation of his German ideas and wishes, Stockmar had, as we have before observed, no other instrument than his personal influence on a few distinguished individuals, and on the circles who cherished ideas akin to his. That he for many months attended the dying Diet was of no account. He undertook two journeys to Berlin in June and September 1848, in order to persuade the King and his Ministers,

1. To restore order at Berlin, and to repossess themselves of the reins of Government.

2. To undertake the Constitution of Germany.

But he found there, on the one side, pedantic scruples, and on all sides, want of energy. He had won over Bunsen to his ideas; but the latter was as little able as himself to effect anything with the King.

Hence his heart and soul interest in German affairs was restricted to watching the turn matters took at Frankfort (where he continued to reside for several months after the dissolution of the Diet), and to an exchange of ideas with some of the more prominent men there. The personal relations which, in the death throes of the Diet, he entered into with Usedom, then later with the two Gagerns, Simson, Beseler, Andrian, Lord Cowley, the representative of

England, and others, were, for him, the most valuable results of his sojourn in Frankfort.

That the Frankfort Parliament did not possess the power necessary to found a new Germany, soon became clear to Stockmar. But when this Assembly had played out its part, he expected just as little from the Prussian attempts at Union, although, from a sense of duty, he took part in the Erfurt Assembly. He saw that on the part of Prussia, there was wanting the first condition of success, a determined will to adopt the means necessary to accomplish the end proposed. 'The reaction that was beginning,' says Freytag, p. 171, 'was unable for a moment to shake the hopeful confidence with which he looked into the German future. He never ceased to inspire courage and to communicate to others, even during the melancholy period which now followed, something of the confident hope which he himself felt. 'The Germans,' he used to say, 'are a good people, easy to govern; and the German Princes, who do not understand this, do not deserve to rule over such a people. Do not be frightened. You younger ones are quite unable to estimate, how great is the progress which the Germans have made towards political unity; I

have lived through it, and I know this people. You are marching towards a great future. You will live to see it, not I—but think then of the old man.'

The years 1849 and 1850 had, however, gradually ripened two convictions in Stockmar: first, that it would be necessary for the present to be content with the union of North Germany under Prussia; secondly, that the reconstruction of Germany could not make any decisive progress by merely peaceful means.

Under Frederick William IV., he expected nothing more of Prussia for Germany; but in the meanwhile towards the year 1850, he entered into relations with the Prince of Prussia and his wife, which were continued during the following ten years. The lively Prussian sense of honour, the untiring striving after what was good and noble, and the insight into the present, which were united in the august couple, offered to him a consoling prospect for the future. Stockmar never ceased to cultivate a good understanding between these Princes and the Royal Family of England, and he advanced, as much as lay in his power, the union between the Princess Royal and Prince Frederick William.

This union fulfilled politically his keenest wishes,

and the efforts of many years. For it was he who had been especially active, in bringing about the invitation of the King of Prussia to the christening of the Prince of Wales, and had thereby paved the way to more intimate relations between the English and Prussian Royal Families. This union, moreover, was equally satisfactory to his personal feelings for the young people.

It was only a few years before the marriage, that Stockmar became acquainted with Prince Frederick William. In the conservative circles of Berlin, in which a pedantry fed by the strangest myths, covered all things as with a mist, the Prince had doubtless heard many tales about Stockmar, 'the secret machinist and revolutionary mole,' which might have rendered him somewhat shy of meeting him.

But at the English Court, where the young Prince made Stockmar's acquaintance, the latter's position and influence lay clear and open in the light of day; and here the sober and upright judgment of the Prince soon banished any misgivings which he might before have nourished, whilst his heart turned with confidence and affection to the old man, whom he

from that time never ceased to treat with the most winning and graceful kindliness.

The Princess Victoria had, from the very first, been Stockmar's especial favourite, whilst, with the heartiness and constancy peculiar to her, she clung to him, and, I may say, honoured him, as a second father. He had the very highest possible opinion of her.

'From her earliest girlhood, I have loved her,' he writes in a letter dated February 18, 1858; 'have expected great things of her, and have striven to be of use to her. I hold her to be exceptionally gifted, in many things almost inspired.'

This was the last royal marriage with which Stockmar, during his visit to England 1856–1857, was called upon to occupy himself.

His *last* visit to England! Already for some years, old age, failing strength, increasing ill health, had warned him that it would soon be time to take leave of that scene of his activity. Moreover, the idea forced itself upon him more and more, that the time had come when the English Court could dispense with him. Already, on November 1, 1855, he had replied to an invitation to come to England as follows:

'All that I could render in the way of warning, advice, and assistance, I have, during eighteen long years, given; such of it as has failed to bear fruit, will hardly do so now. Nature conforms herself to education up to a certain point, but that which lies beyond this point, remains as nature made it. Moreover, the Queen and Prince are now thirty-six years old. They have already learnt much, and have proved themselves thoroughly intelligent and honest-minded. They have passed the point at which leading is required. The advice of friendship would alone be admissible. But for such advice to be effective, it must be given with freshness and force: this is no longer possible for me; and instead of the right impression being produced, my advice would often be that of weakness, over-great prudence, and nervous anxiety.'

A few weeks before his final departure from England, he wrote from Windsor (March 9, 1857) to King Leopold:

'In the spring of 1837, i.e. more than twenty years ago, I returned to England to be of service to the Princess Victoria, now the Queen. This year I shall be seventy; and I feel I am no longer either mentally or physically equal to the laborious and exhausting work of pa-

ternal friend and trusted confessor. I must take leave, and this time for ever. Such is the law of nature; and well it is for me that I can do so with the clearest conscience; for I have worked as long as my strength availed me, and for no unworthy objects. This consciousness is the only reward which I desired to earn; and my beloved master and friend, of his own free will and from the bottom of his heart, and with a thorough knowledge of all the matters and persons here, gladly bears witness to the fact that I have earned that reward.'

Thus then Stockmar retired from his work and returned to his home. The last excursion, of any note, which he undertook, was to Potsdam and Berlin, in the autumn of 1858. Two things moved him to undertake this journey. 1st. The desire to ascertain personally, how matters were going on with the young princely couple, for whom he felt so warmly, and who had entreated him to pay them a visit. 2nd. The interest excited by the turn matters were likely to take in Prussia, in consequence of the illness of the King.

The Prince and Princess of Prussia, as also the young couple, were established at that time at Babels-

berg, near Potsdam, where they were expecting a visit from the Queen of England and the Prince Consort. Stockmar in consequence established himself at Potsdam, whence he drove almost daily to Babelsberg. He there met the English Royal Family once more, and was, as he had ever been, most graciously received by the Princess of Prussia. He had moreover every opportunity of convincing himself of the happiness of the young married people.

About the middle of September he migrated to Berlin, and established himself, with his wife, at the Hotel d'Angleterre, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Royal Palace. His object was to be in the vicinity of the Prince and Princess Frederic William, who, till the completion of their own residence, occupied the Palace.

To the Government and Court circles Stockmar's presence was uncanny. Hardly anyone belonging to these circles was closely acquainted with him, or knew who, and what he was. All they were cognisant of was, that he was somehow connected with the Coburg, Belgian, and English Courts; had influence and confidence there, and that he was a decided liberal. Most people have an irresistible tendency,

when something in a fellow-mortal remains obscure to them, to seek an explanation by presupposing something bad. Hence Stockmar was an English spy, a Belgian intriguant, or a Coburg agent; at all events, a man seeking secret, dangerous, perhaps revolutionary objects.

Had the true motives of Stockmar's presence been explained; viz., the interest taken by an independent political, and patriotic man, in the situation of affairs, and his personal interest for the Prince and Princess Frederick William, they would have shaken their heads in unbelief. For, they would have argued, that a man is only called upon to take interest in political matters if he is in office, and paid for it; and that a personal and purely human interest in young Princes, without an ulterior object in view, is scarcely conceivable.

Already at Potsdam, Stockmar had been amused by hearing of the horror with which the courtiers regarded him. An acquaintance of his, with whom he had been seen walking across the bridge which leads to the Palace at Potsdam, was asked by Count K., with whom it was that he crossed the bridge? to which he replied it was Stockmar.

'Ah!' exclaimed Count K., 'why did you not pitch him into the river?'

At Berlin, a very highly placed individual told the late Countess Bl., who, unknown to him, had become intimately acquainted with Stockmar, that Stockmar was concealed somewhere, in order to carry on his intrigues in secret. He had already tracked him to five distinct lodgings. The Countess replied, this could hardly be the case, as Stockmar had been living for several weeks, quite openly, in such and such an hotel, where she had constantly visited him. Her interlocutor, nevertheless, held fast to his original statement.

On the other hand, Stockmar, during his sojourn at Berlin, by no means lacked the society of persons who knew him and knew how to appreciate him. To say nothing of younger acquaintances, he lived more especially with Alexander von Humboldt, Bunsen, Usedom, Heinrich von Arnim, Rudolph von Auerswald, and he saw almost daily the Belgian Minister, Baron Nothomb.

Humboldt had made Stockmar's acquaintance at the English Court, when he accompanied the King, Frederick William, to the christening of the Prince of

Wales. Stockmar's freshness, originality, and intellectual vivacity, his simplicity in an exceptionally favoured and influential position, and lastly his decidedly liberal tendencies in politics, probably excited Humboldt's interest and esteem. From that time he evinced, at every opportunity, the most friendly disposition. It need not be said that, on his side, Stockmar was powerfully attracted by this intellectual, amiable, world-knowing, and world-known man. The acquaintance was now renewed with much satisfaction on both sides.[1]

With the subject-matter of their conversations, which turned mainly on the actual political situation, the illness of the King, and the question of the Regency of the Prince of Prussia, we are partly made

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[1] A note of Humboldt's to Stockmar of this period (October 23, 1858) may be quoted as characteristic of his tone :

'Highly esteemed, thoughtful, deeply versed in all worldly wisdom, and nevertheless nobly simple friend,—My letter to the King of the Belgians and my little request will acquire a pleasant perfume if they reach him enclosed by you. A man of the woods from Orinoco, half domesticated by court life, has amongst other things learnt cunning, and is not ashamed of it.—With friendly esteem and reverence,

'Yours most faithfully,

'AL. HUMBOLDT.'

acquainted by short notes kept by Stockmar, from which we give the following extracts :—

'16th September.—Humboldt has seen the King, and found him paler, thinner, more sleepy, and with a more dull expression.—Humboldt has endeavoured to make the King understand that I am here, and mentioned my name. *King.* "Who is that? I don't know him. Have never seen him." *Queen.* "He is the man you have always liked so much, who was so good to Bunsen in England." The name is written and spelt. *King.* "No, I cannot recollect ever having known him—Ah! my poor head—my memory is quite gone!"

'Manteuffel congratulates Humboldt on his birthday and signs himself "Your hunted and soon to be shunted friend."

'Humboldt is of opinion that, at the impending change, the literary class must once more come to honour. Raumer is the most mischievous Minister, for he despises science. Westphalen is the most dangerous, because the cleverest. Manteuffel knows Greek at least well, and reads the classics.'

'3rd October—Humboldt reports from Sans Souci :

On Monday last the King awoke with giddiness and deafness. Countess D. says he was for a time unable to speak. It is nearly the anniversary of his first seizure. The King complained to H. that he was worse, that his head was so bad, but that he nevertheless went out walking, as this made his head more free.'

During the time that the Regency was being formed, Stockmar saw a great deal of Rudolf von Auerswald, afterwards President of the Ministry, and frequently discussed with him the formation of the new Ministry. He strongly warned Auerswald against the admission of heterogeneous elements into the Cabinet, and more particularly urged that the Ministry of Justice should be filled with a thoroughly liberal, energetic, strong-handed personality.

It is probable that the party of the Reaction got wind of Stockmar's relations with Auerswald during this period, when the Ministry of the 'new era' was being inaugurated; for when a few years later they fancied that a spirit was beginning to stir in the Palace of the Crown Prince, which did not suit them, they set up a cry against English influence, and it was stated in the Feudal Press, that Stockmar (others said his son, at the time private secretary

to the Crown Princess), had brought the list of the new Ministry 'in his pocket, with him from England.'

After his visit to Berlin and Potsdam in 1858, Stockmar did not again leave Coburg, except for occasional visits to his country-place, Marisfeld, in the Duchy of Meiningen. He had bid the world good-bye. His relations with the Belgian and English Courts were kept up by means of a correspondence, which, considering the altered circumstances, was still tolerably frequent. The King of the Belgians and Prince Albert did not tire of writing to the 'old man;' knowing, as they did, that their letters were a godsend to him.

He had, however, one more opportunity of seeing the Queen and Prince Consort together, on the occasion of the royal visit to Coburg in 1860. It was during this visit that the Prince, whose carriage-horses ran away with him, was in serious danger of losing his life. Stockmar, as well as others, at that time, gladly hailed his escape from this accident as a kind of life-insurance for a long while to come. In the following year the noble Prince was snatched away by illness.

Amongst those on whom this blow fell with the deadliest weight, was Stockmar, who had a right to consider the Prince, politically speaking, as his pupil, and who entertained no ordinary love for him. His feeling was that of a man who sees the work of an entire life destroyed at one blow.

'I feel right well,' he writes March 1862, 'that I cannot judge this matter as one in full possession of his senses; for the thought of the malignity of my personal fate, which has allowed me to live so long that I should endure this cruel blow, drives me at times half mad. An edifice, which, for a great and noble purpose, had been reared, with a devout sense of duty, by twenty years of laborious toil, has been shattered to its very foundations.'

Once more, in the following year (1862), Stockmar saw the broken-hearted Queen at Coburg, and wept with her over the loss that had fallen upon them. When she showed him on her table the portraits and photographs of the beloved Prince, Stockmar broke forth, as she herself relates in the 'Early Years,' in the following words: 'My dear good Prince! how happy I shall be to see him again! and it will not be long.'

On the occasion of this visit of the Queen, Stockmar had the pleasure of again seeing Prince Frederick William and his wife.

'When they were staying at Coburg,' says Freytag, 'one used often to see the Crown Prince and Crown Princess wending their way on foot to the quiet house in the "Weber Gasse," to pay a visit to their old friend. The quiet self-respect of the man to whom these hearty marks of esteem were offered, and the delicate attention of the distinguished visitors, were the natural expression of a strong and intimate friendship between good and worthy men, the value of which the princely visitors were not the last to perceive.'

These august visits, however, were but short breaks in the quiet life which Stockmar led during his last years at Coburg. His failing strength, and the state of his spirits, rendered rest necessary to him.

Bodily suffering assailed him more and more. Now and then, for an hour or so, the old fire would blaze up; 'and then,' says Freytag, 'he liked to talk, and spoke with great openness of men and things, and of the experiences of his rich life; and the listeners were always charmed with the firmness

and breadth of his judgments, the bright look, and gentle vivacity of the old man.'

Those who only saw him at such moments, might well smile at his lamentations over his health, as if they were the mere results of hypochondria. But these hours became fewer and fewer, and those who lived with him the whole day, could see how he sank down exhausted, after an outburst of this kind.

Social intercourse, except with his most intimate friends, became too trying for him. He now only visited his sisters; and at home he saw a few old faithful friends regularly, as General von Alvensleben, who seldom let a single day pass without visiting him. Rückert called but seldom from the country.

Visits from younger friends, who came from afar to see him, were hailed with pleasure. Men like Gustav Freytag, K. F. Meyer, Morier, Roggenbach, and Samwer, could stir the old man's still youthful heart with cheerful emotion. To strangers and casual acquaintances, even to such as had travelled to Coburg on purpose, however illustrious they might be, his door would often remain closed. In addition to the bodily ailments which depressed his spirits, a whole series of melancholy events had befallen him

during the last few years. In the year 1854, Stockmar's younger brother Carl died.

'I have lost,' he writes on August 19, 'my oldest and best friend. We were exceptionally fitted by nature to love each other, and mutually to complement and support each other; and with equal conscientiousness we both obeyed that will of nature, until the day of his death. I have known very few men possessed of such genuine benevolence for others.'

Two years later Stockmar lost his daughter Mary, the wife of Professor Hettner of Dresden, whom he tenderly loved. The year 1861 carried away Prince Albert, and in the year 1863 began the serious and painful illness of the King of the Belgians, which, for Stockmar, the former physician and friend, became a real torture. On March 3, 1863, he writes to the King:

'The intelligent and excellent Forkel[1] goes to Brussels, and will, I hope, have the good fortune to see the good, the honoured, and greatly tried King. For a long time past, I have had no direct news from thence, and, in truth, I feel more composed and

[1] A lawyer in Coburg, now member of the North German Parliament.

less disturbed in the daily forming of good wishes, when I hear *nothing*, than when bad news set faith and hope at nought. I must confess, that I was not prepared for so miserable an old age. Often, very often, I feel on the edge of despair; every hour the enigma of life becomes more dark. And yet it is clear that we are His children, and that the Father must have a heart for us; and so again and again I pray this heart, in its mercy and omnipotence, to lessen the sufferings of my good and beloved King. Amen.'

The King answered that Stockmar was mistaken, as he, the King, had last written, and that it was Stockmar who owed him a letter. On this Stockmar answered, in a letter dated May 18, the last which he ever addressed to Leopold:

'The King is perfectly right. He wrote last and I have not answered. But this is just the effect of deep, continuous sorrow, that it makes people, especially those who are old and weak, incapable of knowing what they are about. Intellect and heart get puzzled, when a sort of melancholy has become the ordinary background of life.

'The King complains of medicine. I can write no

apology for the art, because I have learned to know the exact limits of its power. In the majority of cases, physicians do not know what they ought to know, and in very few cases are they able to do what the sick man requires. Hence the recourse to deception or even lying. It is only in the prevention of disease that a good and great physician can be of real use. May God diminish the sufferings of the good King, and strengthen and uphold him!'

Religious and philosophical contemplations and reflections upon his own past life, naturally occupied a large place in the thoughts of the suffering old man. Melancholy, caused by the shortcomings of human life, is wont to force itself upon old age. Stockmar, however, only gave way temporarily to this depression, which, after all, is nothing but the absence of resignation to the limited and finite nature of the individual. The real foundation of his thoughts and feelings was rather, as I have before said, a willing, cheerful submission to the Law of being, and the sunlight of this religion always dispelled the heavy mists.

From the *blasé* feelings and hopelessness, with

which old age is often stricken, Stockmar remained wholly free.

'Were a youth just entering on life,' he writes in one of his last letters, 'to ask me now, what is the highest blessing which a man should strive for, I should answer him, love and friendship. Were he to ask me, what is the most valuable possession which a man can attain to, I should answer him, the consciousness of having loved and sought after the truth, and of having willed what is good for its own sake. Everything else is empty vanity and a feeble dream.'

The feelings, which to the last moment he retained most vividly, are well described by Meyer in the following words: 'Stockmar never lost confidence in the love and justice of God, in the goodness of the human heart, in the excellence of the German nation, or in the greatness of its future.'

The contemplation of his past life led to thoughts partly depressing, partly devout and humble, partly reassuring and comforting. 'I have been for weeks,' writes Stockmar in a letter, 'confined to my room, and I have begun to put into some order the mass of letters, which for the last fifty years I have received from every nook and corner. This occupation has introduced

me into a vast company of departed spirits. At first, astonishment, which I had never felt before, took possession of me, at the weakness of memory which falls on most men at a great age. Were the proofs not actually lying before me, I should be tempted *bonâ fide* to deny, that I had had anything to do with many of my correspondents. Not even the actual handwriting is sufficient to bring back to my recollection, the faces of many of the writers, or the relations in which I stood to them. Only too many passages of my life wrap themselves up in mist to my powers of vision; on the other hand, however, the powers of my soul become brighter, aided by sadness and humility, and I am able to see how I may balance my moral account. For just as clearly and well attested as stand the debts which others owe me, I can recognise my debts to others, and I express the result in the prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us."'

The same letter continues: 'I had read a number of letters of the year 1817, and had talked about that period with my sister, who is now in her seventieth year. She brought me yesterday a letter of mine,

which had of course altogether escaped my memory, and which I had written to her, immediately after the death of the Princess Charlotte. The words contained in it: "I appear to be here to take care of others rather than of myself, and am perfectly satisfied that it should be so," were prophetical of my future. Forty long years could change nothing in an opinion, which the misfortune of the Prince at this time drove me to utter.'

Thus Stockmar recognised that the kernel of his life had been to labour unselfishly on behalf of others, and the consciousness of this might well support and comfort him.

'In acting thus,' he says in another letter of his last years, 'I only followed the promptings of my own heart, and the good results which I obtained were only the product of this inward impulse. The understanding can distinguish, select, and criticise, but to create and to construct is exclusively the work of the heart.'

Next to contemplation, works of active charity occupied the last portion of Stockmar's life. 'The poor of Coburg,' says Freytag, 'well knew the stone threshold, where they rang the door-bell with anxious

hearts, and from which they returned with such lightened spirits. His way of dispensing charity could claim the merit of being not only abundant and in the highest degree efficient, but exercised with a discretion which did not allow the left hand to know what the right hand did.'

A stroke of apoplexy put an end, in the night of July 8th, shortly before the close of his seventy-sixth year, to this life, so full of unselfish labour for the welfare of others.

He was buried in the family vault in the Coburg cemetery, at that time very simple in its ornamentation. A few years later the interior was richly decorated, according to a design by the Crown Princess of Prussia. Grey marble covers the walls and the roof. An altar of Carara marble, supported by angels sculptured by Professor Hagen, stands in the background. The upper portion of this is occupied by a fresco illustrating the story of the Good Samaritan. Underneath is the following inscription:

'To the memory of Baron Christian Friedrich von Stockmar: born August 22, 1787, died July 9, 1863. Dedicated by his friends in the reigning families of Belgium, Coburg, England, and Prussia.'

Beneath is the verse from Proverbs xviii. 24 :

'There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'

The illustrious Princes who joined together to erect this monument, could not give a more worthy testimonial to the man who had been their faithful servant and friend, and at the same time one more honourable to themselves.

In this monumental testimonial, the sum of Stockmar's life is placed on record. He was the servant of Princes, the friend and confidant of Princes, but in a broad, free, and honest sense, strengthening and urging them on to the fulfilment of their duties in the highest interests of the nations committed to their care. It was his good fortune to meet with able, noble-minded, generous Princes, occupied not with the dead past, but with the living future.

The necessary limitations which, on the other hand, such a life imposed, were abnegation and sacrifice of his own individuality, which was employed, as it were, to complement that of others ; and this self-sacrifice was not only rendered imperative during life, but to a considerable degree extended even beyond the grave.

'Vous avez mené une existence souterraine, anonyme,' an old friend once observed to Stockmar. 'What you have really been, will soon be unknown to everyone.'

Of this Stockmar was himself fully aware. In one of his letters he writes:

'The peculiarity of my position compelled me always anxiously to efface the best things I attempted and sometimes succeeded in accomplishing, and to conceal them as if they had been crimes. Like a thief in the night, I have often laid the seed corn in the earth, and when the plant grew up and could be seen, I knew how to ascribe the merit to others, and I was forced to do so. Even now people often tell me of such and such things, and how this or that arose and came to pass, and in so far as they only speak of the second stage of their production, they are right enough. But those good people know nothing of the first stage. The growth of a plant requires air, light, warmth, &c.; and so it might seem to these different elements, that without the influence of each of them, there would have been no plant at all, and as far as they go, they are right enough. But the first and chief merit is undoubtedly due to him

who, of his own motion, and solely for the eventual benefit of others, laid the seed corn at the right time in the right soil. If, then, men and circumstances generally combine to envelope in night and darkness the best of my conceptions and ideas, and the undertakings founded on them, so that not the faintest suspicion of their origin is possible, that will hardly annoy me.'

He was content to remain always half-hidden before the eyes of posterity. Faithful to his spirit, this book also lifts the veil but a little.

MEMOIRS

OF

BARON STOCKMAR.

CHAPTER I.

RUPTURE OF THE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AND THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

1814.

Youth of Princess Charlotte—Family relations—Project of Marriage with the Hereditary Prince of Orange—Betrothal, December 12, 1813—Rupture, June 1814—Popularity of the projected marriage—Description of the Prince—Difficulties arising from the relation of each of the betrothed to their respective countries—Question where the young pair should at first reside—Difference of their views on this point—The Princess influenced by the suggestions of others, and her own wishes to demand a guarantee in the Marriage Contract that she should not be forced to reside abroad—Transactions between the Prince and Princess—Letter of the Princess to the Regent (April 15, 1814)—Conversation of the Regent with Miss Knight—Letter of the Princess to her father, April 18—Interview of the Princess with the Duke of York—The Princess insists on her demand—Letter to the Duke of York, April 18—Correspondence of the Princess with him (April 22 to 29)—Morning visit of the Hereditary Prince—Correspondence of the Prince and Princess, April 30 to May 4—The Princess's wish acceded to—Proposals for the wording of the clause in the Contract of Marriage—Verbal and written communications of the Princess with Lord

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Liverpool (May 8 to 12)—The father of the Prince of Orange gives his consent to the demands of the Princess—So does the Regent (May 28 to June 7)—The Article accepted on all sides (June 10)—Arrival of the Allied Sovereigns in London (June 7)—In their suite Prince Leopold—Fresh quarrel of the Regent and his wife—The sides taken by the Princess and the Hereditary Prince—Breaking off of the engagement (June 16 to 18)—Letter of the Regent (June 19)—*Coup d'état* of the Regent of July 12—Flight of the Princess—Her banishment—The pretended Russian intrigues—Appendix—Count Van der Duyn's account of the breaking off of the engagement.

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, daughter of the Prince of Wales and of Princess Caroline of Brunswick, was born on January 7, 1796. The melancholy history of the marriage, or rather *non-marriage*, of her parents need not be repeated here. In regard to the character of those parents the Princess expressed herself to Stockmar in the following short and pithy manner: 'My mother was bad, but she would not have become as bad as she was if my father had not been infinitely worse.'

The poor child, in fact, never knew anything of parental love and care, never learnt what home-life meant. The father and mother ceased to live together as early as 1796. The father was on bad terms with the grandfather, the grandmother and the Princess of Wales could not bear each other. The little Princess was at first left in the care of her mother, whom the old King, George III., persistently protected against her husband. She lost this protec-

tion in 1810, when the King became hopelessly insane, and the Prince of Wales assumed the Regency. Even before that time, the daughter had been taken away from the mother, and placed under the care of her grandmother, Queen Charlotte, in Windsor, who unfortunately was by no means well-disposed towards her grandchild. The Princess of Wales was only allowed to see her daughter once a week. But in 1812 a separate town residence, Warwick House, in the immediate vicinity of Carlton House, her father's palace, was assigned to the young Princess, who from this time lived either at Warwick House or Windsor. Her meetings with her mother were now limited to once a fortnight. Thus she grew up surrounded by comparative strangers, with her governess and her 'lady companion,' Miss Cornelia Knight, whose autobiography, published a few years since, furnishes a reliable source of information for the life of Princess Charlotte.

The principal consideration with her father was naturally that his daughter should interfere as little as possible with his comforts. With this object in view she was to be treated as long as possible as a child. At seventeen she had not yet been confirmed, and was not to appear at Court. 'Remember,' said the

Prince Regent to Miss Knight,[1] 'that Charlotte must lay aside the idle nonsense of thinking that she has a will of her own; while I live she must be subject to me as she is at present, if she were thirty or forty or even forty-five.' This, of course, was said under the hypothesis that the Princess remained unmarried. Apart, however, from her position as heiress presumptive to the throne, which rendered an early marriage probable, the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed added to that probability. For marriage seemed to afford the unfortunate Princess the best means of escape from her comfortless state of dependence upon parents at war with each other, and whom it was impossible for her to love. At the same time, it could not but be agreeable to the Regent to be rid of his daughter in so desirable a manner. As long as she remained unmarried she imposed upon him, by the mere fact of her existence, duties and considerations from which the heartless egoist was only too desirous to be freed, and in addition, she formed a burdensome link with the wife whom he hated, more than a married daughter would have done. The Princess had not reached her eighteenth year when a serious project of marriage with the hereditary Prince

[1] 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 240.

of Orange, afterwards King William II. of the Netherlands, was entertained.

Who first originated the idea we are unable to tell. Suffice it to say that Miss Knight relates that as early as October 1813 hints were given to the Princess by Sir Henry Halford, who was her doctor as well as the Regent's, that such a marriage would be considered highly desirable. The old Queen and the Princesses spoke to her to the same effect, which, however, at first appears to have acted on the young lady in a contrary direction. At last, however, persistent insinuations and endless little machinations on the part of the Royal Family produced some impression.

On December 11, 1813, the Hereditary Prince arrived in London. He met the Princess for the first time in a very intimate circle at her father's, and already on the 12th the Princess told Miss Knight that the Regent had taken her apart, and had asked, 'Well, it will not do, I suppose?' and that she had answered, 'I do not say that; I like his manner very well.' Upon which the Prince had put their hands together; and now the Princess said she was engaged, and added to this, 'He is by no means as disagreeable as I expected.' It would appear therefore as if in addition to the fatalistic tendency in regard to matrimony so often met with in young

ladies, and especially in princesses, a certain amount of artful precipitation had been exercised on the part of the father. As early as the following January the intended marriage was confidentially communicated to different foreign sovereigns.[1] At the commencement of March H. Fagel, the Dutch ambassador accredited to the Court of St. James's, and Count Van der Duyn de Maasdam, as Ambassador Extraordinary, formally demanded the hand of the Princess, and received her assent. Not long afterwards the Sovereign of the Netherlands announced the approaching marriage officially to the States General, and the plenipotentiaries on both sides drew up the draft treaty of marriage. In the month of June, however, the engagement was broken off.

In what follows we propose to give authentic information with regard to the history of this rupture, derived partly from the verbal relations of Stockmar, partly from his papers. This seems all the more necessary as very positive errors with regard to that history have found their way into the memoirs of the time and into historical books.

Stockmar's position at the Court of Claremont naturally gave him many opportunities of obtaining

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[1] 'Castlereagh's Letters and Correspondence,' vol. ix. p. 211.

correct information with reference to those events, and the Princess herself on many occasions spoke to him about them. In addition to this, however, exceptionally valuable materials, consisting of the correspondence respecting the causes which led to the rupture, with a short narrative of the intervening events, were contained in a leathern-bound manuscript in quarto left among his papers. This manuscript is partly in the handwriting of Miss Cornelia Knight, with frequent corrections by Princess Charlotte, partly in the handwriting of the Princess herself.[1]

Before we proceed to relate these events we must take a preliminary survey of the circumstances favourable and unfavourable to the projected marriage.

Owing to the old popularity of the House of Orange and the Dutch alliance in England, the public opinion was from the first favourable to the project. After the victory of the Allies over Napoleon England showed much interest in the establishment of the House of Orange in Holland, and, hoping thereby to establish a strong bulwark against France, spared no pains in aiding the creation of the kingdom of the United Netherlands. Thus the marriage fell in with the bent of the national policy. The

[1] This MS. has now passed into the possession of H.M. Queen Victoria.

Princes of Orange, father and son, were known in England, and were not unpopular. The father, afterwards King William I., had lived a long time there. The Hereditary Prince, afterwards King William II., was both by education and habits half an Englishman. He had served with distinction under Wellington in Spain, and had thereby, and by a certain easy-going joviality and affability, combined with frequent hand-shaking, achieved a kind of popularity, both in the army and in society. He did not, however, as we have seen, inspire the Princess with any strong feeling; nor, incapable as he appears to have been of any deep feelings, did she evoke such in him. Let us hear the judgment passed upon him by a person who was by no means an ill-natured observer, Fritz von Gagern. 'The Prince of Orange,' says Gagern,[1] 'already at an early age gave signs of a restless and unsteady disposition. He hated sedentary occupation, and, as compared with his younger brother, his intellectual education was neglected. Enterprising, and full of far-reaching ambition, he has shown little discrimination in weighing the means to the attainment of his ends, and little circumspection in the selection of his confidants. At first the Prince

[1] 'Leben des Generals von Gagern,' vol. ii. p. 54.

took a pleasure in English ways, afterwards he copied Russian models. In his appearance before the public he exercises with adroitness and success all the arts of popularity. By condescension and the appearance of familiarity he often wins even those who are prejudiced against him, but his noddings and hand-shakings are too general to be reckoned a distinction, and he does not escape the suspicion of acting a part. A frivolous temper and love of pleasure developed themselves at an early period. His limited income has not sufficed for the irregularities of his life, and his finances have consequently been mostly in disorder, yet side by side with much extravagance he has given no signs of a generosity of a nobler kind.

'He is believed to be addicted to the pleasures of the table, to gambling, and to every kind of indulgence; whilst no lasting, earnest attachment to any woman, for which he would have been forgiven, has ever been attributed to him.'

Such was Gagern's impression of him in 1830, and we may conclude, therefore, that in 1814, as a much younger man, he was not of a more powerful mind, or a more prudent, firm, and temperate character.

The Dutchman Grovestins expresses himself yet more strongly and unreservedly about the hereditary

Prince in a note to his 'Recollections of Count Van der Duyn and Baron Capellen.' 'Il n'y avait,' he says, p. 218, 'dans cette pauvre tête ni instruction ni idée arrêtée sur quoi que ce fût.'

His free-and-easy manners, and a certain want of tact and refinement, often gave offence to the Princess. She complained that he lodged in no very princely fashion in the house of a tailor;[1] that he returned to London from some races seated on the outside of a stage-coach, and in a highly excited state. In later years, reviewing the past, she said to Stockmar that the Prince of Orange might have been well suited to command a cavalry regiment, but not to be her husband; there was nothing princely about him.

But the real obstacle to the projected alliance arose from the position of the Prince and Princess in their respective countries.

The Princess was heiress presumptive to the English Crown. She stood second only in the succession to any son that might possibly be born to her father; she took precedence of all other members of the royal family. The birth of a son, in the existing state of enmity between her father and mother, was beyond

[1] Lord Grenville writes to the Marquis of Buckingham, March 9, 1814: 'Our future son-in-law lodges at his tailor's.' 'Buckingham's Mems. of the Regency,' vol. ii. p. 75.

all probability. The Regent had at that time given no indication of his wish for a divorce with a view to re-marriage. According to all human probability, therefore, the Princess might consider herself as the future heir to the throne. The hereditary Prince stood in exactly the same position in regard to his father's throne, indeed, as the eldest son, with even more secure prospects. How would it be in the future? Would the Prince remain in England, or would the Princess accompany her husband to Holland? And how would matters be arranged if the Prince or the Princess came to succeed in their respective countries? It does not appear from the documents that any exact stipulation was proposed in the negotiations on the contract of marriage, for the solution of the difficulty. On the contrary, the following points are quite clear from them:

1. There is never the least idea that the Prince or Princess should renounce their rights to their hereditary thrones.

2. The question of residence, with regard to their living together in case either or both of them came to the throne, was left open.

3. It was only to be strictly settled that the two crowns should not devolve on the same person, that the eldest son should succeed in England, and be

educated there from his third or fourth year, the second son in Holland. Still, the latter was not to be excluded from eventually succeeding in England (as, for instance, in case of the death of his eldest brother without children), but the idea was that he must then give up his claim to the throne of the Netherlands.

4. The English succession therefore was to remain unaltered, under all circumstances.[1]

Thus in the event of both husband and wife really succeeding to the throne each in their own country, an inevitable severance was prepared for the future. The Dutch ambassador, Van der Duyn, admitted afterwards in his memoirs,[2] that it would have been wiser if the hereditary Prince had renounced his claims to the crown of the Netherlands in favour of his brother Frederick, and had settled entirely in England, and been naturalised there.

That the difficulty in question should never have presented itself to the Ministers and negotiators on both sides; that of those concerned no one should have asked himself how it could be surmounted, we cannot imagine, without attributing to them a degree

[1] The proofs of the above will be found in 'Castlereagh's Letters,' vol. ix. pp. 151, 152, 181. 'Eldon's Life,' vol. i. p. 521. Miss Knight, vol. i. p. 284, and in the above-mentioned MS. pp. 4, 5.

[2] P. 85.

of short-sightedness and folly which are inconceivable. For their sakes, then, we must suppose that they regarded the accession to the throne of both husband and wife, though theoretically possible, yet for one reason or another as practically improbable, and therefore not to be taken into consideration. But we have only conjecture to go upon in considering the why and wherefore of this improbability. We may imagine, for instance, that it was thought the Princess would accompany her husband to Holland, and make that country her home, and that twenty or thirty years might elapse before the English throne would be vacant by the death of her grandfather and father, and that by that time she might have a son of age, and be inclined to resign her claims in his favour.

But whatever may have been the ideas entertained as to the settlement of affairs in case both husband and wife should come to the throne, there still remained the pressing question as to what arrangement to make in the meantime. Without doubt the young couple could for the present reside in either country, or divide their time between both. It was natural that the Prince should wish to reside in the Netherlands. But unfortunately this by no means suited the taste of the Princess. Inexperienced as she was, she clung nervously to her own country, and she could

hardly comprehend that it was possible to live in a foreign land. This naïve feeling was vehemently displayed at the first mention of the subject. Miss Knight relates[1] that the Prince, in one of his first private conversations with the Princess, mentioned that she would have to spend two or three months each year in Holland, that the Regent and his Ministers had not thought it advisable to tell her this, but he (the Prince) did so, because he wished they should both be thoroughly open and honest with each other. On this, Miss Knight relates, the Princess had a violent fit of sobbing and hysterical crying. She had had no idea that she should have to leave England, but had promised to yield to the wish of the Prince. This agrees with what the Prince says in a letter of May 3, 1814, to the Princess.[2] 'When I saw you the second time, I told you I hoped you would reside at times abroad; I saw indeed that the idea was disagreeable to you, but you gave me to understand you would do it if I wished.' What is here said of the behaviour of the Regent and his Ministers, is highly characteristic. Instead of treating the poor Princess in a matter so important to her with openness, confidence, and fatherly care, and, inexperienced as she was, making

[1] Vol. i. p. 269. [2] MS., p. 44.

the circumstances on every side clear to her, it was their policy to keep her in the dark, so that without knowing what she was doing, matters might be pushed on to a point from which retreat would be more and more difficult.

As she was by no means wanting in good sense, this must naturally have excited her suspicion, and made her all the more ready to listen to the whispers of those who were opposed to the marriage-scheme. Foremost among these was her own mother. That this union was favoured by the Regent and the Royal Court, was in itself sufficient to set the Princess of Wales against it. Added to this, she had been slighted and ignored on the side of the Royal Family of the Netherlands in the most offensive manner. The Dutch envoys had, on a hint from the Regent, omitted all the usual forms of civility towards her, let alone any attempt to gain her acquiescence in the marriage. The Hereditary Prince had pursued the same course, and in every way sided with the Regent against his wife. The existence of her daughter in England in itself strengthened the position of Caroline. How then could she wish for a marriage, which not only threatened to remove the young Princess from England, but would bring her under the influence of a husband who had openly shown so little friendly

feeling towards her mother, and so much submission to her mother's enemy, her father?

The members, too, of the Parliamentary Opposition were hostile to the marriage. They saw in it a link in the chain of Tory policy which, according to their views, bound England up too closely with the tendencies and interests of the Continental Powers. It is true these men, as Lauderdale, Whitbread, Tierney, Brougham, could not directly influence Princess Charlotte, but they could do so indirectly, as being in constant intercourse with her mother, and with Charlotte's intimate friend, clever and active Miss Mercer Elphinstone (daughter of Lord Keith, afterwards Madame de Flahault).

Thus it was natural enough that everything unfavourable to the Prince of Orange and the union with him should be most fully retailed to the young Princess. Her aversion to leaving England offered the most effective and safe pretext for insinuations imputing to the Regent a wide and deeply-laid scheme against his daughter. It was put into her head that the Regent desired before all things to get her out of the country, and that the intended marriage was the means to be employed; he would then, when she was once abroad, do everything to prevent her return and annul her right of succession. The Princess, to whom

her country, and still more her claims to the throne, were very dear, readily believed these insinuations, finding herself as she did treated by her father, of whose character she had the worst opinion, without affection or trust. She therefore now obstinately determined to demand the introduction of a clause in the marriage contract, which should guarantee her never being forced to leave England, or to remain abroad against her will.

If we look back at the present day with an unprejudiced eye to the situation as it then was, the fears of the Princess seem exaggerated; and the plans attributed to the Regent appear to be the mistaken suggestions of distrust. Anyone acquainted with English politics must know that it is simply impossible that the Regent could succeed in keeping his daughter away from the country against her will, or deprive her of her right of succession. It is another question whether the Regent had not calculated that Princess Charlotte, if only once settled in Holland, would gradually find herself bound there by ties so strong that her return to England would under any circumstances be very difficult, if not morally impossible. At the same time, it must be confessed that the want of confidence with which the Princess had been

treated in the negotiations for the marriage gave her good grounds for the gravest suspicions.

We will now, guided by the MS. before referred to, explain shortly the negotiations which arose upon the article of the marriage contract, demanded as a security by the Princess.

As we saw, the securing of a permanent residence in England lay very near the Princess's heart for several reasons. During the months of February and March she entered on the subject with the Prince only. He appears, whether to please her, or whether with honest intentions, to have given her hopes that they would reside in England a considerable part of the year.

Thus the Princess tells her uncle, the Duke of York, in a letter of April 29, that the Prince had on February 9, expressed the wish in writing that Parliament might insist on stipulating that they should reside in England at least six months in every year. But in point of fact nothing was done to realise the wishes of the Princess. Preparations were made for an establishment in Holland, but none for a residence in England. Under these circumstances, the Princess at last took courage, and wrote to her father.[1]

[1] The Princess to the egent, April 15, 1814. The letter was not dated the 16th, as Miss Knight affirms.

She demanded, she said, an explanation on the question of her future residence. When the marriage was first proposed to her she had no idea that her home would not be in England. She hoped to see an express stipulation inserted in the contract of marriage, that she should not be forced ever to leave England against her will, and especially before a permanent residence had been appointed here for her. It must cause her anxiety to know that no preparations had been made in England for a house, or the appointment of a royal establishment.

The Regent returned no answer, but sent for Miss Knight on the 18th. He expressed his extreme displeasure at the letter. The condition demanded by the Princess was impossible, and contrary to the duty of a wife. If she insisted upon it the engagement must be broken off, and he would then never give his consent to any other marriage. Charlotte already enjoyed too much liberty; if the rupture took place he would be obliged to impose greater restraint on her. He had himself told her from the first it was only fair that she should pass more than half the year in Holland. Miss Knight was to repeat all this to the Princess, and return the next day with her answer. This answer[1] expressed very curtly

[1] The Princess to the Regent, April 18, 1814.

in writing that the Princess could not withdraw a word of what she had said.

When Miss Knight took the answer back to the Regent she found him less angry, and the interview ended with the arrangement that the Duke of York, the favourite uncle of the Princess, should go to her and talk over the matter.

The Duke brought with him Mr. Adams, the chancellor of the Duchy of Cornwall, an uncle of Miss Mercer Elphinstone, who had formerly instructed the Princess in English law. Both the Duke and Mr. Adams repeated the arguments employed by the Regent, but added one which partially neutralised those advanced by him. They said that the magnitude of the annuity which in case of her marriage would be asked from Parliament was the best proof of the intention to allow her to reside chiefly in England.

After the interview the Princess wrote to the Duke of York, April 18, 1814, that she must insist on the stipulations she had sent to the Regent. In vain her uncle York asked for another interview, whilst he hinted at evil counsellors in the ranks of the Opposition. She declined the interview. The Princess then wrote on April 22 to the Duke of York, that her only motive for demanding the insertion in the marriage contract of the clause in question, was, that she could

never be willing to leave England. Her devotion to her own country was the more reasonable because she stood so near to the succession. She must most solemnly deny any connection with political parties. The answer of the Duke of York to the Princess of April 24 represents to her that if her resolution never to leave England was unalterable, she ought to have felt from the first that the marriage was an impossible one, and ought not to have allowed matters to go so far. This determination would stand in the way of a marriage with any other prince of suitable rank. He then explains to her the difference between an heir presumptive and an heir apparent. Her succession was not absolutely certain, as it still depended on the supposition that her father would never have a son. He repeated that there was no design to keep her abroad for any length of time, or the idea would never have arisen of demanding so large an annuity for her.

The Princess answered on the 25th April that inclination and duty alike compelled her to form her first acquaintances and habits of life in a country at the head of which she might one day be placed, and to gain here that necessary knowledge of men and things, from which she had hitherto been excluded by her retired life. That the condition demanded by her might lead to the breaking off of the engagement she had not

foreseen, but she must allow it to come to that, even if no other marriage should be possible for her. According to law she was indeed only heiress presumptive, but from existing circumstances the difference between this and heiress apparent was in her case only nominal.

The Duke of York in his answer of April 26 shows how far the Princess had already bound herself. The Dutch envoys had made a formal offer of marriage, and she had given her consent in a state audience. The Prince of Orange had sent over money for the purchase of jewels, leaving the choice to her, and she had already given several orders. She must reflect what sort of light all this would throw on her. Princess Charlotte replied on April 29, that she had taken some time for her answer, and thought herself in no way bound by what had already passed. The audience of the envoys and the purchase of the jewels were only preliminary steps of very small importance.

On April 30, rather early in the morning, the Hereditary Prince called on the Princess, who, not being quite well, was still in bed. She named a later hour for seeing him. He declared he would wait till she was up. She got up rather out of temper, but received him in a friendly way, and they exchanged assurances of unaltered affection. The Prince, whose aim seems to have been to work on the feelings of the

Princess, went from her at once to the Regent, and soon brought back from him the news that he would see them together, that there was a misunderstanding, and that it would never have entered his, the Regent's, mind, that the Princess should live chiefly abroad. The Princess excused herself on account of her nervous state; in reality, because she could not trust her own firmness when face to face with her father. She wrote, however, to the Hereditary Prince on April 30, that her views and feelings were unaltered; the less they both discussed the question in dispute the better; she did not wish to see him again until her conditions were accepted.

Then follows a letter of May 3, from the Hereditary Prince to the Princess in which he reminds her that he had in their second conversation expressed the hope to her that she would from time to time reside abroad; he had, indeed, at once seen that this idea was disagreeable to her, but she had given him to understand she would do it if he wished.

The answer of the Princess of May 3, declares that she demanded in the marriage contract, a security, sanctioned by Parliament, that she never should be removed or kept away from England.

The Hereditary Prince answered on May 3, in bad English, showing a disposition to yield a little, that

he could not have any objection to the desire of the Princess in the way in which she put it ('at which, in the manner you have stated it, I can impossibly have any objection'). He only asked her whether, even if the security she demanded were obtained, she was still determined never to leave England, and not even occasionally to visit Holland.

The Princess replied on May 4, she could only express her readiness to fulfil the wishes of the Prince as far as lay in her power. The sense of duty which bound her to England made even short absences disadvantageous and painful. She did not wish to imply that she would never under any circumstances leave England, but at present, and for some time after the marriage, there were strong reasons against it, and chiefly the circumstance that as yet she had been totally without any opportunity of making herself acquainted with English society.

The obstinacy of the Princess produced some effect. On May 8, she received a visit from the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool. He explained to her that there was no idea that her permanent residence should be out of England, and made two proposals with regard to the article to be inserted in the marriage contract, between which she might choose: 1. That it should not be lawful for her to leave

England without the consent of the Sovereign, who could also command her return to England, and that after she became Queen she might not leave the country without the consent of Parliament; or,

2. That she should not leave England without the permission of the Regent, and under no circumstances should be absent longer than a certain fixed number of months in each year.

The Princess answered Lord Liverpool on May 9 with justice, that the two proposals afforded her no security for perfect freedom in the choice of her residence, and on this she must take her stand. Lord Liverpool then wrote to the Princess on May 9, that the Ministers had told the Regent it was impossible to yield to the demand of the Princess. Upon this the Princess made an apparent concession, in which in form she yielded to the authority of her father, whilst in reality everything was yielded to her wishes.

In a letter on May 11 she gave Lord Liverpool to understand that if the desired guarantee in the marriage contract were accorded her, so that she could not be sent out of England or detained abroad *against her will*, she would submit to the further condition that neither should happen *without the accompanying consent of the Regent.*

In vain Lord Liverpool in a visit of May 12 repeated

the old arguments against the demands of the Princess. She was resolute, and already on May 13 she learnt that the Regent was not absolutely averse to the amendment proposed by her. In fact the Regent wrote on May 15 to the Prince of Orange, the father, telling him of the wish of the Princess, and declaring his readiness to accede to her demands, if the Princes of Orange, father and son, insisted on it. After the sovereign Prince of the Netherlands had in a letter to his son of May 28 expressed his consent to the demands of the Princess, the Regent appeared in person at his daughter's on June 6, and told her he would, though unwillingly, eventually give his consent to the article demanded by her, but would still leave her a little time for reflection. She, however, informed the Regent on the next day, June 7, by letter, that she kept to her determination.

This article of the marriage contract, thus accepted by all parties, and by which the wishes of the Princess were secured, runs as follows :—

'It is understood and agreed that H.R.H. Princess Charlotte Augusta shall not at any time leave the United Kingdom without the permission, in writing, of His Majesty, or of the Prince Regent acting in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, and without H.R.H.'s own consent. And in the event of H.R.H.

being absent from this country in consequence of the permission of His Majesty, or of the Prince Regent, and of her own consent, such residence abroad shall in no case be protracted beyond the term approved by His Majesty, or the Prince Regent, and consented to by H.R.H. And it shall be competent for H.R.H. to return to this country before the expiration of such term, either in consequence of directions for that purpose, in writing from His Majesty, or from the Prince Regent, or at her own pleasure.'

On June 10 the Princess had acceded, in writing, to this article, as drawn up by the English and Dutch plenipotentiaries, and all obstacles appeared to be removed. If then the breaking off of the engagement followed on the 16th, the explanation must be sought in what follows. On June 7 the allied sovereigns, with their victorious generals, arrived in London on a visit. This visit caused a new crisis in the quarrel between the Regent and his wife, as the latter was not permitted to appear at the festivities at Court, from which therefore Princess Charlotte was also excluded. Insulted in her mother and for her mother's sake, the Princess took all the more decidedly her mother's part. At the same time she made the acquaintance of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who was in the suite of the Emperor of

Russia, and who produced a favourable impression on her. All this together led to the rupture with the Prince of Orange. He had always taken part against the Princess of Wales. He now appeared at the court festivities from which his *fiancée* was excluded, and had thus deeply offended her. She told him, therefore, in a personal interview on June 16, it would be impossible for her to leave England immediately after the marriage (which the Prince naturally wished and hoped, and the Princess had lately represented as possible); she owed it to her mother, whose only protection she was, to remain now in the country. She must also demand that after the marriage their common home should always be open to the Princess of Wales. As the Hereditary Prince would not agree to this, she at once told him the marriage was impossible, and repeated this to him in a letter of the same day, in which she left it to him to give the necessary explanations to the Regent. As the Prince naturally declined to do this,[1] she was obliged herself, on June

[1] *The Letter of the Prince is as follows:*

8 Clifford Street, June 18, 1814.

My dear Charlotte.—I found the night before last your letter, and have lost no time to acquaint my family with its contents, but I cannot comply with your wish by doing the same with regard to the Regent, finding it much more natural that you

18, to write to her father, when she tried to lay the blame of what had happened on the Hereditary Prince. The Regent replied in a short letter on June 19, in which he expressed his 'deep concern' at what had happened. Then followed an interval of some weeks, in which some hopes were still entertained that the Princess might change her mind. As she, however, gave no signs of this, the Regent, on July 12, executed a grand *coup d'état*, and solemn act of punishment. He appeared suddenly at Warwick House, at the Princess's, dismissed all her household, as evident accomplices in her insubordination, and sentenced her to a sort of banishment to Cranbourne Lodge, near Windsor. The Princess asked permission to retire for a short time to subdue her emotion, threw herself into a hackney coach, and took refuge at her mother's, in Connaught Place, whence she was only brought back late at night by her uncle, the Duke of York. She stayed a few days at her father's palace, Carlton House, and was then taken to Cranbourne Lodge, where she lived for some time, sur-

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should do it yourself; and it is besides much too delicate a matter for me to say anything to him on the subject.

Hoping that you shall never feel any cause to repent of the step you have taken, I remain

Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM.

rounded by new attendants. There was, however, no longer any talk of the Orange marriage.

We might here close this chapter, were it not necessary to refer to a circumstance which, according to the opinion of several writers, such as the Duke of Buckingham in his 'Memoirs of the Court of the Regency,' and Count Van der Duyn in his 'Reminiscences,' was of decisive importance in breaking off the engagement with the Prince of Orange, and which we passed over in silence in the preceding pages in order not to break the thread of the narrative. In the end of March there arrived in England the Grand-Duchess Catharina of Russia, the widow of the Grand-Duke of Oldenburg, a clever, and, it is said, an intriguing woman, who quickly became intimate with Princess Charlotte. People talk now of a craftily-conceived Russian intrigue, the object of which was to separate the Prince of Orange from his intended bride, in order to secure him for a Russian Grand-Duchess; and, in fact, two years after the breaking off of his engagement, in 1814, he married a sister of the Grand-Duchess Catharina, Anna Paulowna. The belief in this Russian intrigue seems to us only the product of the morbid desire common to all men, but especially to diplomatists, of accounting by premeditated design and artificial machinations for events

which have arisen from far simpler and more natural causes. The truth appears to be this. As Miss Knight relates, the two high-born ladies, the Grand-Duchess Catharina and the Princess Charlotte, early exchanged the most confidential communications as to their respective *affaires de cœur*, and it is easy to imagine that the English Princess took occasion to hint more or less distinctly that her bridegroom did not please her particularly. It is not less probable that the Grand-Duchess on such an avowal would advise her to do no violence to her own feelings. Thus the Russian influence is reduced to this, that the Grand-Duchess inspired the Princess with more courage to follow her own instinct in the negotiations respecting an engagement in which her heart was not concerned, which in itself presented considerable difficulties and disadvantages, and against which, as we saw, she was actively and persistently set by other people. The Russian influence may therefore have thrown an additional weight into the scale against the success of the marriage project. But this is very different from a premeditated game, carried on and won by the Russian Princess in order to snatch the Hereditary Prince away from the English Princess for herself or for her sister.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I.

Count Van der Duyn's Account of the Rupture of the Engagement.

Count Van der Duyn was, as we have seen, one of the Dutch envoys employed to negotiate the Orange marriage. A special section of his 'Reminiscences'[1] is devoted to this affair. In it occurs the following paragraph on the closing scenes of the whole drama :—

'Ce fut à l'occasion de la rédaction des Articles, et lorsqu'on était tombé d'accord sur un séjour des futurs époux mi-partie en Angleterre et en Hollande, que la Princesse Charlotte s'echappa furtivement du palais de son père, et qu'elle alla se réfugier chez sa mère, sur quoi elle déclara elle-même au prince d'Orange qu'il ne fallait pas songer à cette union.'

In this whole account there is scarcely one word which is true. A remarkable proof how an intelligent man, who, from his very position, must have had accurate information, can, in the course of years, entirely forget transactions which passed almost under his own eyes, and in which he had been himself engaged as a negotiator.

We need only recall the successive events as we have just related them.

1. The proper wording of the articles was agreed on as early as June 10.

2. They contained nothing about a sojourn half in Eng-

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[1] Fragment No. 4.

land, half in Holland, but rather they secured the Princess from all obligation to reside in Holland.

3. The rupture between the Prince and Princess had taken place, and was declared as early as June 16.

4. The flight of the Princess to her mother took place some time later, on July 12.

And 5. The Princess did not escape from her father's palace, Carlton House, but from Warwick House, where she herself resided.

How difficult is the task of the historian! He cannot even place confidence in the testimony of those who, from position and character, would appear to be peculiarly trustworthy.

CHAPTER II.

AT THE COURT OF LEOPOLD OF COBURG.

1816–1817.

Stockmar summoned to England to enter on his appointment as physician, March 1816—His first intercourse with the Prince—Marriage of the Prince, May 2—Prince Leopold—Commencement and progress of his acquaintance with Princess Charlotte—Description of the Princess—The married life of the royal pair—Their court (Mrs. Campbell, Baron Hardenbroek, Sir Robert Gardiner, Colonel Addenbrooke)—Stockmar's place at Court—His position and state of mind—Baron Juste—Personal Sketches: the Queen; the Regent; the Duke and Duchess of York; the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, Cumberland, Cambridge, and Gloucester; Wellington; Anglesea; Castlereagh; Countess Lieven—Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia.

IT has been related in the biographical sketch, how Stockmar first became known to Prince Leopold of Coburg, and how he was appointed his physician after the Prince's engagement to the Princess Charlotte, of whose early life we treated in our first chapter. He arrived in England to enter on his appointment on March 29, 1816. Prince Leopold was at Brighton, and Stockmar was ordered to go there as soon as possible, as the Prince was impatient to see

him. He received the new physician with great kindness, but, from the shortness and slightness of their former acquaintance, it was only gradually that Stockmar could become intimate with His Royal Highness. However, during the three weeks' stay at Brighton, he had, besides his professional interviews, several long conversations with the Prince, in which Leopold entered with much openness upon his own private concerns, as well as upon politics. Stockmar was also employed for the German correspondence and had to fulfil the various duties of a secretary.

The marriage of the Prince with the Princess Charlotte took place on May 2. The royal couple spent rather more than a week at Oatlands, the Duke of York's residence, and then settled for the season, till August, in London, at Camelford House. From that time they resided at their own beautiful country place, Claremont, near Esher, sixteen miles from London.

It is time now to examine more closely the circle to which Stockmar at this time belonged.

Prince Leopold, born December 16, 1790, was the youngest son of Francis, Duke of Coburg, and his wife, the Duchess Augusta, Princess of Reuss-Ebersdorf, a sensible, lively, and clever woman, whose humorous letters may be read in the biography of the Prince Consort, published by direction of Queen Victoria.

The son himself, in his 'Reminiscences,' published in the same volume, says of her, 'My beloved mother was in every respect distinguished, warm-hearted, possessing a most powerful understanding.' The Prince had inherited much from her. He was one of the handsomest men of his day, with the utmost charm of manners, which, however, never allowed the Prince to be forgotten in him. His later life, already matter of history, attests his remarkable qualities as a ruler. Those in more immediate contact with him were captivated by the charm of a thoroughly original personality.

The combination of great knowledge of the world with the finest tact and self-possession in his way of dealing with men and things, intellect, knowledge, imagination, benevolence, humour, and kindly irony, and added to this, the charm and urbanity of his manner, made the Prince infinitely attractive. He was agreeable to others in many different ways. The 'Reminiscences' in the Appendix to the Biography of Prince Albert, already quoted, as well as the letters printed in the Appendix to Juste's 'Leopold I.,' may give some idea of his inimitable talent for conversation and writing, in intimate intercourse. What impression he produced on those, then most in contact with him, may be gathered from a letter of his aide-

de-camp and equerry, the Dutch Baron, Hardenbroek, dated March 23, 1816:—'The more one knows him, the more one values him; his conduct is perfect. Always quiet, always circumspect, he will never be elated by prosperity, or cast down by adversity. He sees everything in its true light. This preserves him from mistakes and mortifications. In a word, he is judicious, clever, and thoroughly good.'

Stockmar's letters express no less admiration of the Prince, whom he calls his 'glorious master, a manly prince, and princely man.' (Letter of October 17, 1816.)[1]

On the Prince's birthday, December 16, 1816, Stockmar writes to the Prince's former tutor, Privy Councillor Hohnbaum, in Coburg:—'I cannot refrain from expressing the gratitude I feel to you, and which fills my mind to-day. That all good men who know the Prince more intimately must love and honour him, is his own merit; but that they can love him with a conscientious conviction, which makes that feeling not only a duty, but the greatest delight and enjoyment, I feel they owe to you. And so I pray that heaven, in addition to your enviable consciousness of good done, may lay to your account a portion of the

[1] It is impossible to render in English the play of words which gives point to this extract. The original is, 'herrlichen Herrn, einen menschlichen Fürsten und fürstlichen Menschen.'—*Trans.*

universal blessing which you have won for mankind by the education of so noble a prince.' Further on in the same letter he says :—' The Prince's calmness, consistency, and rightmindedness astonish even the English, who are not in general quick at appreciating and admiring foreigners; and you hear on all sides such expressions as " He is the most amiable man I ever saw ! " " What a complete English gentleman ! " " He will be our hope in these dangerous times ! "'

The Prince had already, for his age, seen and experienced much. The marriage of his sister Julia with the Grand-Duke Constantine of Russia had introduced him to the great stage of the world. Though this marriage turned out an unhappy one, and the Grand-Duchess separated from her husband as early as 1802, Leopold remained on good terms with the Russian Court, and even with Constantine himself—a proof of the prudence of his conduct. He entered the Russian army at the age of fifteen, shortly before Austerlitz. After the turn which matters took at that time, he paid Napoleon a visit in 1807 in Paris, and attended the Congress of Erfurt in 1808. In the year 1813 he was again the first German Prince who joined the Russian army for the liberation of Germany. He was appointed to Constantine's Staff, and took a distinguished part in the battle of Culm.

He negotiated successfully at the Congress of Vienna, as well as in 1815 at Paris, to procure an increase of territory for his brother, the reigning Duke of Coburg. We have already seen how he came to England in June 1814, in the suite of Alexander of Russia, and became acquainted with Princess Charlotte. Miss Knight, who is usually so trustworthy, declares (i. 300) that Leopold tried in various ways to attract the attention of the Princess, without at first making any favourable impression on her. She must be mistaken here. Besides, as she allows (i. 226), it was not she who possessed the intimate confidence of the Princess, but Miss Mercer Elphinstone. The Princess herself told Stockmar that, from her first meeting with Leopold, she wished to become better acquainted with him, and had expressed this to her aunt York (the Prussian Princess, daughter of Frederick William II.), regretting that this was so difficult for her, as she was excluded from the Court festivities. Her aunt therefore promised to give a ball for her, at which she should meet the Prince. She seems to have come to an understanding with him tolerably soon. Leopold had no easy game to play. The Regent naturally, so soon after the breaking off of the Orange engagement, was not at first favourable to his suit, and the conduct of the Prince had also been misrepresented

to him, as if he had employed unworthy ways and means. Yet he succeeded not only in vindicating himself, but in winning the good opinion of the father in the highest degree. The Ministers, and even several members of the Royal Family, especially the Dukes of York and Kent, were favourable to him, and after Leopold's departure, in the end of July 1814, the Duke of Kent enabled him now and then to have some communication with the Princess, who on her side let him know that her feelings were unchanged. She and her political friends wished the Prince to visit England again the following year, to urge his suit. But he saw the danger he ran of thus offending the Regent, and only increasing the difficulties in his way, and held back. The Princess, with her impetuous disposition, thought this an excess of discretion, which excited her impatience, the more so, as she had allowed herself to be talked into believing by her political friends, that the Prince might be too submissive to her father. His determination, however, not to offend the Regent, but to wait till time softened his feelings towards his daughter, proved the right one. In January 1816 he received an invitation to come to England, and after many difficulties, arising from matters of detail, the marriage at last took place.

We have already made some acquaintance with

Princess Charlotte in the first chapter. She was by nature clever, lively, cheerful, and really kind-hearted, though somewhat capricious, satirical, and fond of mischief—above all, what is called in English, impulsive; i.e., following vehemently the feeling of the moment without the least self-restraint. She was deficient in that training which natural family life alone can give, and in the self-command which is especially required of princes, but in which, in many respects, they are less than other people schooled by the pressure of circumstances.[1] She was not wanting in information, and was especially well read in English history. A few extracts from Stockmar's Diary and letters will describe her more closely to us.

We read in the Diary of May 5, 1816:—'I saw the Sun for the first time at Oatlands. Baron Hardenbroek (the Prince's Equerry) was going into the breakfast room. I followed him, when he suddenly signed to me

[1] Compare what is said above with a passage in Bollmann's Letters, in Varnhagen von Ense's 'Denkwürdigkeiten,' vol i. p. 124. 'The unfortunate position in which the Princess grew up has had a fortunate effect on her education—at least, it has prevented that exhaustion and impoverishment of character which are so common in Court life. She feels strongly and has a strong will. In a tragedy she sheds floods of tears, in a comedy she shakes all over with laughter. During the play she nods without ceremony to those she likes—a singular Princess, but a most interesting creature.'

with his hand to stay behind; but she had already seen me, and I her—"Aha! docteur," she said "entrez." She was handsomer than I had expected, with most peculiar manners,[1] her hands generally folded behind her, her body always pushed forward, never standing quiet, from time to time stamping her foot, laughing a great deal, and talking still more. I was examined from head to foot, without however losing my countenance. My first impression was not favourable. In the evening she pleased me more. Her dress was simple, and in good taste.'

On a nearer acquaintance the Princess showed herself most friendly to Stockmar. She took pleasure in conversing with him, showed her liking for him by many little attentions, and brought him forward in the presence of distinguished guests. Under the date of September 6, we read:—'The Princess in good humour, and then she pleases easily. I thought her dress particularly becoming; dark roses in her hair, a short light blue dress without sleeves, with a low round collar, a white puffed-out Russian chemisette, the sleeves of lace. I have never yet seen her in any dress which was not both simple and in good taste.'

[1] The description in the text explains how Van der Duyn in his 'Reminiscences,' p. 83, could describe the Princess as 'une jeune fille qui avait l'air d'un garçon mutin en cotillon.'

Her happy marriage with an excellent man could not but have a salutary and improving influence on the Princess. 'The Princess,' writes Stockmar, October 25, 1816, 'is extremely active and lively, astonishingly impressionable, and nervously sensitive, and the feeling excited by a momentary impression not seldom determines at once her opinion and conduct. Intercourse with her husband has, however, had a markedly good effect upon her, and she has gained surprisingly in calmness and self-control, so that one sees more and more how good and noble she really is. When in good humour, she is inclined to show many attentions to those around her; but she attributes great value to these attentions, however little she may appear to do so. A want of sufficient appreciation of any mark of kindness on her part affronts her greatly, and will for a long time disturb her good opinion of the person so distinguished. She never for a moment forgets the king's daughter.' Yet, in spite of the excellent educating influence of her husband, a certain inconsiderate and undisciplined manner still broke forth occasionally to those persons who did not please her.

A passage in the Diary of December 21 vividly depicts an instance of this. Among other guests invited to a great dinner was Duke Prosper of

Aremberg. 'Prosper is a hideous little mannikin, dressed entirely in black, with a large star. The Prince presented him to the Princess, who was at the moment talking to the Minister Castlereagh. She returned the Duke's two profound continental bows by a slight nod of the head, without looking at him, or saying a word to him. At table Prosper sat between Lady Castlereagh and the Princess, who never spoke one word to him, and brought her elbow so close to him that he could not move. He sat looking straight before him with some, though not very marked embarrassment. He exchanged now and then a few words in French with the massive and mighty Lady Castlereagh, by whose side he looked no larger than a child. When he left, the Princess dismissed him in the same manner in which she had welcomed him, and broke into a loud laugh before he was fairly out of the room.'

The relations between husband and wife were of the happiest. 'In this house,' writes Stockmar, on October 17, 1816, 'reign harmony, peace, and love—in short, everything that can promote domestic happiness. My master is the best of all husbands in all the five quarters of the globe; and his wife bears him an amount of love, the greatness of which can only be compared with the English national debt;' and on August 26, 1817:—'The married life of this couple

affords a rare picture of love and fidelity, and never fails to impress all spectators who have managed to preserve a particle of feeling.'

The usual attendants of the Prince and Princess consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Campbell, Lady in Waiting and Keeper of the Privy Purse to the Princess, and the Aides-de-camp and Equerries, Baron Hardenbroek, Lieut.-Col. Sir Robert Gardiner, and Col. Addenbrooke. As Stockmar lived for many years in daily intercourse with these persons, we may extract the following description of them from one of his letters.

'Mrs. Campbell, Lady in Waiting to the Princess, is a small thin woman of forty-five, a widow, sharp and angular in every feature and movement, pretentious, because she too was once young and handsome, and because she has a good understanding; and yet not unbearably pretentious, just because she is really sensible. Extremely well informed, and thoroughly upright, she conducts the correspondence of the Princess and manages her accounts with the greatest ease and to her entire satisfaction. Amongst us, she opposes everything she sees and hears, and meets everything that men can say or do with such consistent contradiction, that we can tell beforehand with certainty what will be her answers to our

questions. She is so thoroughly possessed by this spirit of opposition that it is impossible for her to be true to any party; and she is now of the Court, now of the Ministerial, now of the Opposition, now of the Popular party, according to her opponent. As a rule, she is without mercy, and her conversation is therefore sharp and biting. But she has occasionally her humane days, in which she is pleased, in fact disarmed—that is, when her arrows have hit and wounded. One gains some insight into such a singular character when one knows that she has had bitter experiences with men, and that in an illness during a seven months' sea voyage she was kept alive only on brandy and water. This lady is now our only lawful female society, and we therefore treat her as the representative of the whole sex, with a half free, half enforced respect.'

Of Baron Hardenbroek, the same letter says:—'The more I get to know him, the more I am convinced that such a man could scarcely be found again for his position. Just because I so esteem him, I am extremely grieved when I see that his faithful and honest intentions are not always thoroughly appreciated.'

Colonel Addenbrooke, Equerry to the Princess, is thus described in the same letter:—'A man of sixty-

three; a tall, strong, and for an Englishman of his age a very active, old bachelor, with snow-white hair, and a tremendous nose. He is a thoroughly honourable man, simple and upright, a sincere friend to his friends, and no one's enemy; a faithful servant of the Princess. He possesses a rare knowledge of all dainty dishes, which he has acquired everywhere at the fountain-head, and which he can analyse and criticise in a masterly fashion. This is the cause of the only weak point I can see in him—viz., a weak stomach, into which he carefully crams a mass of the most incongruous things, and then complains the next day of fearful headaches.'

Sir Robert Gardiner, who had served for eight years under Wellington, closes the list. The letter praises his faithfulness and honesty. Through a long life he remained Stockmar's attached friend.

Stockmar's position at this Court was naturally in the beginning a very humble one. An insignificant German physician in England, he was not even considered as their equal by all the members of the household, and even with the rest his intercourse was limited. 'Surrounded by the noise of the fashionable world,' he writes (letters of October 25 and December 16, 1817), 'I am solitary, often alone for days together; my books are my society, my friends, my

loves.' His employment as physician never filled up his time. Purely scientific occupations could by no means satisfy his nature, formed as it was for practical life. To this must be added frequent suffering from his eyes and from dyspepsia. Hence often arose a feeling of *ennui* and hypochondria. Yet, on the other hand, when in better health and spirits, he saw the advantages of the regular, solitary, and quiet mode of life which he had to lead at Claremont, and which gave him rest, calmness, and a feeling of contentment. 'This feeling,' he thought, 'will increase the more I recognise that the most valuable side of life really consists only in its negative conditions'—i.e., to use the words of Schopenhauer, true human happiness lies in freedom from sorrow and suffering—an attitude of resignation which Stockmar was by no means framed by nature to maintain consistently. The great compensation for all the disadvantages of his position lay in the development of his personal relations to the Prince and Princess. The true and solid qualities of Stockmar's heart and mind won their confidence; the cheerful, humorous side of his character helped in making this intercourse easy, pleasant, and soon intimate. The Princess showed increasing regard for Stockmar up to the day of her death. The Prince treated him more and more as a friend, and en-

trusted him with the office of secretary. Stockmar became to him, as he says in a letter of this date, 'the most valued physician of his soul and body.'

Stockmar made but few intimate acquaintances beyond the Court circle. Amongst these he especially praises, both in his Diary and letters, the Saxon Minister in London, Baron Juste. He says of him, 'He is a sensible, thoroughly well-informed, closely observant, excellent old man; of such devotion to the Royal House of Saxony, that the tears always come into his eyes when he speaks of it, and he even shows emotion, though of a slighter kind, in speaking of any member of the Ducal branch of the Saxon family.' Stockmar often in later days mentioned with gratitude the kindness with which Juste initiated him into a knowledge of English politics.

Although, from his very occupation and position, Stockmar, during the first years of his stay in England, made but few intimate acquaintances among the English themselves, yet many distinguished and remarkable persons at the Court of his master passed in review before him. The Diary contains many sketches of such people, most powerfully delineated with a few strokes; and it may interest the reader to see a few of them.

The Queen Mother (Charlotte, wife of George III.). 'Small and crooked, with a true Mulatto face.'

The Regent. 'Very stout, though of a fine figure; distinguished manners; does not talk half as much as his brothers; speaks tolerably good French. He ate and drank a good deal at dinner. His brown scratch wig not particularly becoming.'

The Duke of York, the eldest of the Regent's brothers. 'Tall, with immense *embonpoint*, and not proportionately strong legs; he holds himself in such a way that one is always afraid he will tumble over backwards; very bald, and not a very intelligent face: one can see that eating, drinking, and sensual pleasure, are everything to him. Spoke a good deal of French, with a bad accent.'

Duchess of York, daughter of Frederick William II. of Prussia. 'A little animated woman, talks immensely, and laughs still more. No beauty, mouth and teeth bad. She disfigures herself still more by distorting her mouth and blinking her eyes. In spite of the Duke's various infidelities, their matrimonial relations are good. She is quite aware of her husband's embarrassed circumstances, and is his prime minister and truest friend; so that nothing is done without her help. As soon as she entered the room, she looked round for the Banker Greenwood,

who immediately came up to her with the confidentially familiar manner which the wealthy go-between assumes towards grand people in embarrassed circumstances. At dinner the Duchess related how her royal father had forced her as a girl to learn to shoot, as he had observed she had a great aversion to it. At a grand *chasse* she had always fired with closed eyes, because she could not bear to see the sufferings of the wounded animals. When the huntsman told her that in this way she ran the risk of causing the game more suffering through her uncertain aim, she went to the King and asked if he would excuse her from all sport in future if she shot a stag dead. The King promised to grant her request if she could kill two deer, one after the other, without missing; which she did.'

Duke of Clarence (afterwards King William IV.). 'The smallest and least good-looking of the brothers, decidedly like his mother, as talkative as the rest.'

Duke of Kent (father of Queen Victoria). 'A large, powerful man; like the King, and as bald as anyone can be. The quietest of all the Dukes I have seen, talks slowly and deliberately, is kind and courteous.'

Duke of Cumberland (afterwards King Ernest Augustus of Hanover). 'A tall, powerful man, with

a hideous face ; can't see two inches before him ; one eye turned quite out of its place.'

Duke of Cambridge (the youngest son of George III.). 'A good-looking man, with a blonde wig ; is partly like his father, partly like his mother. Speaks French and German very well, but like English, with such rapidity, that he carries off the palm in the family art.'

Duke of Gloucester. 'Prominent, meaningless eyes ; without being actually ugly, a very unpleasant face, with an animal expression ; large and stout, but with weak, helpless legs. He wears a neckcloth thicker than his head.'

Wellington. 'Middle height, neither stout nor thin ; erect figure, not stiff, not very lively, though more so than I expected, and yet in every movement repose. Black hair, simply cut, strongly mixed with grey ; not a very high forehead, immense hawk's nose, tightly compressed lips, strong massive under jaw. After he had spoken for some time in the anteroom with the Royal Family, he came straight to the two French singers, with whom he talked in a very friendly manner, and then going round the circle, shook hands with all his acquaintance. He was dressed entirely in black, with the Star of the Order of the Garter and the Maria Theresa Cross. He spoke to all the officers present in an open friendly way, though but briefly. At table he sat next the Princess. He ate

and drank moderately, and laughed at times most heartily, and whispered many things to the Princess's ear, which made her blush and laugh.'

Lord Anglesea (the general). 'Who lost a leg at Waterloo; a tall, well-made man; wild, martial face, high forehead, with a large hawk's nose, which makes a small, deep angle where it joins the forehead. A great deal of ease in his manners. Lauderdale[1] told us later that it was he who brought Lady Anglesea the intelligence that her husband had lost a leg at Waterloo. Contrary to his wishes, she had been informed of his arrival; and, before he could say a word, she, guessing that he brought her news of her husband, screamed out, "He is dead!" and fell into hysterics. But when he said, "Not in the least; here is a letter from him," she was so wonderfully relieved that she bore the truth with great composure. He also related that, not long before the campaign, Anglesea was having his portrait taken, and this picture was entirely finished, except one leg. Anglesea sent for the painter and said to him, "You had better finish the leg now. I might not bring it back with me." He lost that very leg.

The Minister, Lord Castlereagh. 'Of middle height;

[1] Lord Lauderdale, d. 1839; the friend of Fox; since 1807, under the Tories, an active member of the Opposition.

a very striking and at the same time handsome face; his manners are very pleasant and gentle, and yet perfectly natural. One misses in him a certain culture which one expects in a statesman of his eminence. He speaks French badly,[1] in fact execrably, and not very choice English.[2] The Princess rallied him on the part he played in the House of Commons as a bad speaker, as against the brilliant orators of the Opposition, which he acknowledged merrily, and with a hearty laugh. I am sure there is a great deal of thoughtless indifference[3] in him, and that this has sometimes been reckoned to him as statesmanship of a high order.'

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[1] A friend told us the following anecdote, as reported by an eyewitness. The diplomatic head-quarters of the Allies was, in April 1814, at Dijon, where they received the news of the fall of Napoleon. A great dinner was arranged in honour of the event. Lord Castlereagh, who had to propose the health of the ladies, did so in the following words—'Le bel sexe partoutte dans le monde.'

[2] Lord Byron, in the introduction to the sixth to the eighth cantos of 'Don Juan' says, 'It is the first time since the Normans that England has been insulted by a minister (at least) who could not speak English, and that Parliament permitted itself to be dictated to in the language of Mrs. Malaprop.'

[3] As to the frivolous scepticism or sceptical frivolity of Castlereagh, a striking proof is given in his Memoir on the Second Peace of Paris, in which he says, 'In politics and in war, security for seven or ten years is as much as human foresight can provide for.'

Countess, afterwards Princess, Lieven (wife of the Russian Ambassador). 'A disagreeable, stiff, proud, and haughty manner. It is true she is full of talent, plays the pianoforte admirably, speaks English, French, and German perfectly; but, then, she is well aware of it. Her face is certainly handsome, though too thin, and the pointed nose, as well as the mouth, which can be contracted into various folds, show even outwardly the small inclination she has to consider others as her equals. Her neck is like a skeleton's.'

Countess Lieven may serve as the introduction to the portrait of the *Grand-Duke Nicholas* (afterwards Emperor) of Russia, who in November 1816, when he was just twenty, paid a visit to the Prince and Princess at Claremont. 'He was attended,' says the Diary, 'by General Kutusoff, and a councillor of State. After he had paid his respects to the Duchess of York and the Princess, the Prince presented Gardiner to him as decorated with a Russian order, whom he asked where he had gained his cross; then Addenbrooke, and, lastly me. Then came dinner. The Grand-Duke sat between the Princess and the Duchess of York exactly opposite to me, so that I could observe him thoroughly. He is a singularly handsome, attractive young fellow; taller than Leopold, and, without being

thin, straight as a pine. The face youthful as himself, perfectly regular features, a fine open forehead, well-arched eyebrows, a very good nose, a beautiful small mouth, a well-shaped chin. He has a soft young moustache and imperial, wears the uniform of a mounted Rifleman—a simple green coat faced with red—the silver epaulettes of a colonel, a shabby-looking star, a white belt, and a steel sword with a leathern porte-épée; he is lively without any shyness or stiffness, and yet very well mannered. He talks a great deal, and speaks French with a very good accent; he accompanies his words with not unpleasing gesticulations. If all he said was not exactly clever, it was at least thoroughly pleasant, and he appears to have a decided talent for flirting. When he wishes in conversation to give particular emphasis to anything, he shrugs his shoulders, and throws his eyes up in rather an affected way. He shows great self-confidence in everything he does, but apparently without pretension.

'He did not take much notice of the Princess, who rather made up to him, than he to her. He ate for his age very moderately, and drank nothing but water. When Countess Lieven played after dinner on the piano, he kissed her hand, which struck the English ladies present as peculiar, but decidedly desirable.

Mrs. Campbell could not cease praising him: "What an amiable creature! he is devilish handsome; he will be the handsomest man in Europe." The next morning the Russians left the house. I was told that when it was time for bed, a leathern sack was filled in the stable with hay for the Grand-Duke by his servants, on which he always sleeps. Our English friends thought this affected.'

We only add one observation to this life-like description, viz. that one already sees in it an indication of that theatrical talent of the future Emperor Nicholas, which later on developed itself in him more and more.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEATH OF PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

1817.

Pregnancy of the Princess—Hopes of the Nation—Stockmar as physician keeps aloof—Mistakes in the medical treatment during the pregnancy—The birth—A dead Prince—Alarming change after the birth—Agony and death of the Princess—The sorrow of the Prince—Vow of friendship with Stockmar by the death-bed—The Prince's state of mind—Suicide of the accoucheur, Sir Richard Croft—Stockmar advises the Prince to reside at first in England.

In the year 1817 the happiness of the princely pair was increased by the wished-for prospect of an heir. The whole nation sympathised joyfully in these hopes. England was in a very uncomfortable state. The failure of the crops and general stagnation of trade which followed the peace had caused great distress in the lower classes, and their discontent was kept up by radical agitators. Numerous riotous meetings, excesses, and seditious risings seemed to threaten the state with a revolution. There was little to cheer the people in the sight of the blind and insane king and the frivolous, indolent, unprincipled Regent. The people

therefore in their cravings for hope rested their expectations on the better time which would dawn under Princess Charlotte, and the thought that she would present the country with an heir to the throne contributed to the quieting of all parties. Stockmar wrote on August 26, 'Bets for enormous sums have long been made on the sex of the expected child, and it has been already calculated on the Stock Exchange that a Princess would only raise the funds $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., whilst a Prince would send them up 6 per cent. In order to obtain sure intelligence respecting the condition of the Princess as soon as possible, the ambassadors of the highest Powers have paid me, the poor doctor, the most friendly and obliging visits.'

The Princess passed through the whole time of her pregnancy without any drawbacks, and yet, as is well known, it resulted in death.

Stockmar did not, and would not, attend the Princess professionally, though it would have cost him but a single word to be appointed one of her physicians in ordinary. He refused firmly and consistently, during the whole period, to undertake, though only temporarily, any of the treatment; as, for instance, bleeding, for which, as the physician residing in the house, they were naturally inclined to apply to him. The instinct and sagacity with which he recognised

this attitude of non-interference as the one suitable to him, the clearness with which he vindicated this attitude to himself, the firmness with which he withstood all the temptations of opportunity, good-nature, and vanity to break his resolution, are so characteristic of the man that we cannot resist dwelling a little on this theme.

'I can only thank God,' he writes, on February 10, 1818, 'that I never allowed myself to be blinded by vanity, but always kept in view the danger that must necessarily accrue to me if I arrogantly and imprudently pushed myself into a place in which a foreigner could never expect to reap honour, but possibly plenty of blame. I knew the hidden rocks too well, and knew that the national pride and contempt for foreigners would accord no share of honour to me, if the result were favourable, and, in an unfavourable issue, would heap all the blame on me. As I had before at various times, when the physician was not at hand, prescribed for the Princess, these considerations induced me to explain to the Prince that, from the commencement of her pregnancy, I must decline all and any share in the treatment.'

'But as after the course of the first three months of the period I, as a daily observer, thought I could detect errors in the treatment, I gave the Prince a

long lecture, and entreated him to make my observations known to the physicians of the Princess. I need not dwell on the issue of these observations. But you can see how calm I may be as to the result. I could and would have no share in the honour of being physician to the Princess; and though I never in the least anticipated so terrible an issue, yet my convictions on that point were so strong, that I even firmly refused—great and tempting as was this proof of confidence—the offer to attend the Princess professionally whilst laid up after her confinement, as after the birth, the physicians in ordinary could not stay longer in Claremont. I could therefore only be induced to see the Princess when the physicians declared her state to be one of extreme danger, and expressly called me in two hours and a half before her death.'

'This strict adherence to the line of conduct I had laid down for myself had the effect of making my colleagues always most friendly towards me; and, later on, all blame was averted from the man who had abstained from hunting after honour and emolument. When I recall all the circumstances, I feel but too vividly the greatness of the danger which I escaped. Believe me, every one would be now rejoicing over my interference, which could never

have availed anything, and the English physicians, our household, our friends and acquaintance, the whole nation, even the Prince himself, would find the cause of this incredible disaster in the incapacity of the German doctor. And in my hypochondriacal state I should perhaps have myself believed in the accusations of others, and self-reproaches from within would have raised the burden of sorrow pressing on me from without to an unbearable degree.'

The mistakes which Stockmar thought he detected in the treatment of the Princess during her pregnancy all arose from the custom then prevailing in England (unfortunately fashion rules even in such things) of lowering the organic strength of the expectant mother by bleeding, aperients, and low diet, and this treatment was pursued for months.

The physician in ordinary to the Princess was the celebrated Dr. Baillie; Sir Richard Croft was appointed as accoucheur. He is described in the Diary, after the first meeting, as 'a long, thin man, no longer very young, fidgety, and good-natured; seems to have more experience than either learning or understanding.'

According to the still existing reports of the two doctors, the first signs of the approaching birth showed themselves on Monday, November 3, 1817, at seven

o'clock in the evening (Stockmar says at a quarter past five). He adds, there were good grounds for expecting them at least ten days earlier. 'Although the first pains were unusually slight,' says Stockmar, 'and the labour therefore progressed but slowly, yet, during the night of the 3rd to the 4th, all had gone on so far well that a happy termination was expected within the next six hours, and the great dignitaries of State necessary to attest the birth (the Ministers, Archbishop of Canterbury, &c.) were summoned. This had hardly been done when, about two o'clock in the morning, the pains ceased almost entirely. Although the strength of the Princess kept up, and no abnormal symptoms of any kind appeared, the labour progressed but very slowly during the following day, the 4th. The night of the 4th to the 5th passed by in exactly the same manner. On the 5th, towards noon, the pains increased, and, at last, at nine o'clock in the evening (therefore after fifty hours, or, if Stockmar's account is right, fifty-two hours), the Princess was delivered of a fine large dead boy. Artificial aid was not employed. Immediately after the birth the Princess appeared quite well. The news of the death of her child had not particularly affected her. This state of apparent well-being only lasted till midnight.'

'Then Croft came,' says the Diary, 'to my bedside, took my hand, and said the Princess was dangerously ill, the Prince alone, I must go and inform him of the state of things. The Prince had not for three days left his wife's room for an instant, and had now, after the birth of the child, retired to rest. I found him resigned to the death of the child, and he did not appear to understand that the state of the Princess was very serious. In about a quarter of an hour Baillie sent to say that he wished I would see the Princess. I hesitated, but at last I went with him. She was in a state of great suffering and disquiet from spasms in the chest and difficulty in breathing, tossed about incessantly from one side to the other, speaking now to Baillie, now to Croft. Baillie said to her, 'Here comes an old friend of yours.' She stretched out her left hand eagerly to me, and pressed mine twice vehemently. I felt her pulse, which was very quick; the beats now full, now weak, now intermittent. Baillie kept giving her wine constantly. She said to me, "They have made me tipsy." For about a quarter of an hour I went in and out of the room, then the rattle in the throat began. I had just left the room when she called out loudly, "Stocky! Stocky!" I went back; she was quieter, but the rattle continued. She turned more than once

over on her face, drew her legs up, and her hands grew cold. At two o'clock in the morning of November 6th, 1817—therefore about five hours after the birth of the child—she was no more.'

Her death was not caused by the actual birth, and the post-mortem afforded no explanation of the real cause. It therefore appears that, weakened by the preceding long-continued and depressing treatment, the Princess died of exhaustion from the fifty hours' labour. Probably she would have been saved had mechanical help been employed soon enough. The English physicians refused to give it, as it was their principle never to use artificial means when nature alone could effect the delivery. In point of fact, this was the case here, but all the strength was thus exhausted. It is impossible to resist the conviction that the Princess was sacrificed to professional theories.

The task of telling the Prince of her death fell to Stockmar. 'I did so,' he writes, 'in no very definite words. He thought she was not yet dead, and on his way to her room he sank into a chair. I knelt by him; he thought it must be a dream; he could not believe it. He sent me once more to see about her; I came back and told him it was all over. Then we

went to the chamber of death ; kneeling by the bed, he kissed her cold hands, and then raising himself up, he pressed me to him and said, "I am now quite desolate. Promise me always to stay with me." I promised. Soon after he reminded me again, and asked if I knew well what I had promised. I said yes, I would never leave him, as long as I saw that he confided in me, that he loved me, and that I could be of use to him. I did not hesitate to promise,' wrote Stockmar a few days later to his sister, 'what he may perhaps claim for ever, perhaps even next year may find no longer necessary to him.' A remarkable proof how, even after deep emotion, the sceptical vein made itself felt in Stockmar. And yet this apparent coolness was no bar to most true and thorough devotion. He continues in the same letter, 'My health is tolerable, for though I am uncommonly shaken, and shall be yet more so by the sorrow of the Prince, still I feel strong enough, even stronger than I used to be. I only leave the Prince when obliged by pressing business. I dine alone with him, and sleep in his room. Directly he wakes in the night I get up, and sit talking by his bedside till he falls asleep again. I feel increasingly that unlooked-for trials are my portion in life, and that there will be many more of them before life is over. I seem to be

here more to care for others than for myself, and I am well content with this destiny.'

The grief of the Prince at his loss was very deep. When in his seventy-second year he drew up his reminiscences for his niece, Queen Victoria, he wrote of himself, 'November saw the ruin of this happy home, and the destruction at one blow of every hope and happiness of Prince Leopold. He has never recovered the feeling of happiness which had blessed his short married life.'

Stockmar says of him in a letter of November 7, 1817, 'As long as his grief found no expression, I was much alarmed for his health, now he is relieved by frequent tears and moans.'

On November 19 he writes to the former tutor of the Prince, 'You know the Prince well, and know what he has lost. Without seeing him, you can picture the state in which he is. He is too good, too resolute, too devout to give himself over to despair, though life seems already to have lost all value for him, and he is convinced that no feeling of happiness can ever again enter his heart. I prescribe for him morally and physically with tolerable success, as I know him well, and feel that ordinary remedies would be hateful to him.'

'His is one of those natures which cannot be inspired with sensations and convictions from without, but which rather develope them from within, and for which therefore one can do nothing but supply the requisite materials.'

A few weeks later Stockmar says, in a letter to his brother-in-law, Opitz, 'The favour of princes is not in general worth a straw, but he (the Prince) is in every respect an upright, good man, and therefore an incomparable prince.'

He writes again on December 21: 'He is good, and every day grows better; his whole sorrow he turns into a blessing. The misfortune which has befallen him has made me afraid to expect much from his future life; but that his character will thrive, that I can swear to. One needs a large heart to love him as he deserves.' And on February 10, 1818: 'He possesses in the activity of his innate, early-developed scientific taste an admirable preservative from a dreamy absorption in his sorrow. He studies English history most perseveringly in its original sources, and finds there the most trustworthy and convincing proofs that a man can seldom be called happy, that there is no enduring good but a good conscience, and that even in this there is great room for self-deception.'

If the Prince was incited by his grief to gloomy views on human affairs, the catastrophe had a like influence on the sympathetic mind of Stockmar. 'On my arrival here,' he writes, 'I was not dazzled by suddenly seeing life in its highest forms, but through the noble examples of love and virtue which were before me, I allowed myself to be misled into believing for a time that virtue as well as vice might meet here with its natural reward, and that was indeed nothing but credulous blindness. I have become cold and bitter, chiefly against myself, and with unrelenting severity and the most bitter scorn I hunt down every wish of my heart, however innocent, as a ridiculous presumption. One is not happy thus, that is certain, but one is invulnerable to the blows of fate, which are sure not to fail us.'

The true sympathy shown by Stockmar in the Prince's grief endeared him naturally to him. On November 29, 1817, the Diary mentions, 'The Prince has given me some of his letters to Princess Charlotte, before their marriage, to read.' On December 2 he says, 'Yesterday I returned the Prince these letters, in which he shows himself a man of rare uprightness, wisdom, and goodness.'

In January 1818, the Prince, accompanied by Stockmar, went to the seaside to strengthen his

weakened health and seek change of thought in fresh scenes. Here on February 14 he received the distressing news that Sir Richard Croft had committed suicide.

Among Stockmar's papers there is a letter to him from Croft, written on Friday, November 7, the day after the death of the Princess, in which he says, 'My mind is at present in a sad state. May God grant that neither you nor any connected with you may suffer what I do at this moment.' The depositions at the coroner's inquest proved that ever since the terrible calamity at Claremont, Croft had been in a state of the deepest anxiety and excitement bordering on insanity, so that he often lost all command of himself. Early in February he spent the night in the house of a lady, in order to attend her sister, the wife of a clergyman, in her confinement. As this was protracted, he became quite beside himself, and exclaimed, 'If you are anxious, what must I be?' During the night he shot himself with a pistol, which he found in the room he occupied. The clergyman's wife was safely confined.

'Poor Croft!' exclaims Stockmar in his Diary. 'Does not the whole thing look like some malicious temptation, which might have overcome even some one stronger than you? The first link in the chain of

your misery was nothing but an especially honourable and desirable event in the course of your profession. If you made a mistake in your mode of treatment, still, individual mistakes are here so easy. Thoughtlessness, and excessive reliance on your own experience, prevented you from weighing deeply the course to be followed by you. When the catastrophe had happened doubts, of course, arose in your mind as to whether you ought not to have acted differently, and these doubts, coupled with the impossibility of proving your innocence to the public, even though you were blameless, became torture to you. Peace to thy ashes! on which no guilt rests, save that thou wast not exceptionally wise or exceptionally strong.'

The relations and friends of the Prince in Coburg naturally wished to see him there, after the great sorrow that had befallen him. His own feelings drew him powerfully in that direction. His grief would have been quieted the sooner in his old loved home. Stockmar was the first to advise him against it, and to convince him that it would be right to remain for the present in England.

Stockmar felt he should spend the time of mourning in England, where the whole nation spontaneously, and as though it were a matter of conscience, mourned with him; having, too, already shown him so much

goodwill and confidence. 'Here it is fitting for him to erect a worthy monument to the dead by showing how nobly a man can bear an incredible misfortune, caused by no fault of his own. Were he not to do so, it would be looked on in England as ingratitude, and a want of right feeling, and the Prince would thus weaken and disturb his whole position here.'[1]

Besides this, all considerations induced him, though death had destroyed his prospects as husband of the future queen, to maintain the position he had founded in England, and make it the basis of his whole life. His financial independence he owed chiefly to the 50,000*l.* which Parliament had settled on him for life. To spend this money on the Continent would not have

[1] The following passage from Bollmann's Letters in Varnhagen's 'Reminiscences,' vol. i. p. 126, are characteristic of the impression caused by the death of the Princess, and of the light in which the future position of the Prince was viewed by the English nation. 'The death of Princess Charlotte has caused many genuine tears to flow. My daughters could not for many days regain their usual equanimity, and this feeling was general. The beautiful example of a pure and most happy life had aroused a very great and general interest in the Princess and Prince, around whom clustered many hopes, now all destroyed. The Prince of Coburg stands out in noble outline before the nation. If he does nothing in the opinion of the public to break the association with their loved Princess, and remains conspicuously the noble man of blameless life, I believe that further events may make his career a very remarkable one.'

been worthy of the Prince, and if he had done so, there was cause to fear in a time of such excitement, that he would have increased the inclination, which already existed, to deprive him wholly, or in part, of this annuity. For a politically ambitious man there was now no theatre in England ; but if he should ever wish to think of any new political position on the Continent, he could not promise himself a greater vantage-ground than would be afforded him by a well-established and favourable position in England.

He therefore gave up, for the present, a visit to the Continent, and the events which followed proved again how right were Stockmar's views on this point, founded as they were on an union of sound feeling and clear understanding.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE OF KENT, THE BIRTH OF PRINCESS VICTORIA, AND THE DEATH OF THE DUKE.

1818–1820.

THE long period between the death of Princess Charlotte and the accession of Prince Leopold to the throne of Belgium, passed by without any remarkable outward events for Stockmar, till just before its close. Yet it raised him to a higher social position, largely increased his knowledge of the world, of men, and of business, and thus contributed to his political education and the development of his character.

His papers, too, are, comparatively speaking, but of small interest during this period. We shall, however, give a fragment from Stockmar's notes inscribed:

The Duke of Kent's Marriage, the Birth of Princess Victoria, and Death of the Duke.

The death of Princess Charlotte, in opening up the prospect of succession to the throne to the younger

sons of George III., had inspired them with a desire to marry. As yet, the only married sons were the Duke of York, whose marriage was childless, and the Duke of Cumberland, whose first living child was not born till 1819. The remaining three brothers all married in 1818, the year following the Princess's death, the Duke of Cambridge on May 7, a Princess of Hesse Cassel, the Dukes of Clarence and Kent on the same day, July 11, the former a Princess of Meiningen, the latter a sister of Prince Leopold, the widowed Princess of Leiningen.

The Duke of Kent, then fifty-one years of age,[1] was a tall, stately man, of soldierlike bearing, already inclined to great corpulency. In spite of the entire baldness of the whole crown of his head, and his dyed hair, he might still be considered a handsome man. His dress was simple, but in good taste, and scrupulously neat and nice. He had seen much of the world and of men. His manner in society was pleasant and easy, intentionally courteous and engaging, and as he possessed the gift of speech in no small degree, he expressed himself in English and French with a certain degree of eloquence and elegance. The play of his countenance betrayed calculation. He was not

[1] Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III.; born November 2, 1767.

without ability and culture, and he possessed great activity. His dependants complained of his strictness, and pedantic love of order. The regulation of his finances, and the perfecting of what English people call domestic comfort and the household system, and an extraordinary love of patronising and concerning himself in the affairs of others (he received almost everyone who wished to see him and who desired his help)—these were his occupations. The Duke was well aware that his influence was but small; but this did not prevent him from forwarding the petitions he received whenever it was possible, with his own recommendation, to the public departments; so that his name was never uttered without a sigh by the functionaries of every public office. For these purposes he maintained an active and very extensive correspondence, which three or four private secretaries were scarcely able to master. Liberal political principles were at that time in the minority in England, and as the Duke professed them, it can be imagined why he was hated by the powerful party then dominant. He was on most unfriendly terms with his brothers. The widowed Princess of Leiningen,[1] whom the

[1] Victoria, daughter of Duke Franz of Saxe Coburg; born August 17, 1786, first married in 1803 to the Prince of Leiningen, who died 1814.

Duke married, was of middle height, rather large, but with a good figure, with fine brown eyes and hair, fresh and youthful, naturally cheerful and friendly, altogether most charming and attractive. She was fond of dress, and dressed well and in good taste. Nature had endowed her with warm feelings, and she was naturally truthful, affectionate, and friendly, unselfish, full of sympathy, and generous.

The Duke proved an amiable and courteous, even chivalrous husband. Directly after the marriage, he fixed his residence at the Castle of Amorbach, in Bavaria, belonging to the Leiningen princes. He was firmly persuaded that he would one day come to the throne, and that the Duchess would give him an heir. 'My brothers,' he often said, 'are not so strong as I am; I have lived a regular life. I shall outlive them all; the crown will come to me and my children.' When the Duchess found there was the prospect of an heir, it was the most ardent desire of her husband that his child, in his eyes the future heir to the throne, should be born in England. Financial considerations made the journey to England and the sojourn there appear difficult. In vain the brothers were appealed to, but at last friends came to his assistance. The Duke proceeded with his wife to England, in the spring of 1819, and shortly afterwards

a pretty little princess, plump as a partridge, was born. He was delighted with his child, and liked to show her constantly to his companions and intimate friends, with the words, 'Take care of her, for she will be Queen of England.' Towards the end of the same year, the Duke went with his family to the seaside, at Sidmouth, in order, as he said, to cheat the winter. A prediction had been made to him that two members of his family should die in the year 1820, but he was far from applying this to himself.[1] When out for a walk he got wet and took cold; the result was acute inflammation of the lungs, which soon assumed an alarming aspect. General Wetherall, an old attendant and friend of the Duke's, arrived the day before his death. He asked us, the physicians, if it would be injurious to speak to the Duke about signing his will. To help in deciding on this point, the Duchess took me to see the invalid about five o'clock in the afternoon. I found him half delirious, and told the Duchess that human help could no longer avail, and that with regard to the will, the only question was, whether it would be possible to so far rouse the Duke to con-

[1] The Duke died on January 23, 1820, and on January 29 his father, George III.

sciousness, that the signature would have legal force. Wetherall then went to the Duke, and the presence of the friend of his youth had a wonderfully stimulating effect on the dying nervous energies. Wetherall had hardly spoken to the Duke, before he quite came to himself, enquired about various things and persons, and had his will read over to him twice. Gathering together all his strength, he prepared to sign it. With difficulty he wrote 'Edward' below it, looked attentively at each separate letter, and asked if the signature was clear and legible. Then he sank back exhausted on the pillows. The next morning all was over.

The poor widow found herself, owing to the Duke's considerable debts, in a very uncomfortable position at the time of his death. Her brother Leopold enabled her to return to Kensington, where she henceforth devoted herself to the education of her child, Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER V.

CANDIDATURE OF PRINCE LEOPOLD FOR THE GREEK THRONE.

1829–1830.

Preliminary circumstances of this Candidature — Negotiations with Capodistrias through Stockmar's brother, Charles—Peace of Adrianople—Protocol of February 3, 1830, offering the Greek throne to Leopold—Further history of the Candidature—The weak point of the position assumed by the Prince, and the useless efforts to improve it—The Prince's demands to the European Powers—Reaction in the Prince—Disheartening impression caused by the correspondence entered into with Capodistrias—The Prince declines definitively—Opinions of Matuszewicz, Lieven, Stein, Gervinus, and Mendelssohn, on Leopold's decision — The real motives of his refusal—Justification of his line of action.

THE events connected with Prince Leopold's candidature for the throne of Greece, extended over the years 1829 and 1830. During the whole of this period Stockmar was the chief confidant of his master,[1] and, as various passages in his letters to his family prove, he was at times overwhelmed with work arising from this business. We find small material in his papers as to the negotiations themselves, and his influence

[1] See the Despatches of Prince Lieven of May 28, 1830 ; Receuil de documens relatifs à la Russie. Paris, 1854, p. 627.

during their progress. But we have before us notes taken from his communications as to the position which he took with regard to certain chief points in the affair. The conduct of the Prince in this business and the turn matters ultimately took, have given rise to such various, often unfavourable, and for the most part incorrect opinions, and Stockmar was so nearly concerned in it all, that we cannot on that account refrain from discussing the whole business. The papers laid before the British Parliament[1] offer a safe and sufficient basis for our purpose, supported as they are by verbal communications of Stockmar's.

We will begin by communicating from the Diary of Stockmar's younger brother Charles, now before us, some circumstances hitherto unknown, in regard to the first negotiations between Leopold and Capodistrias, i.e. the history of the origin of that Greek candidature.

The first overtures with regard to it were made to the Prince, as he himself relates in his 'Reminiscences,' from which we have so often quoted,[2] in the

[1] Communications with H.R.H. Prince Leopold relating to the Sovereignty of Greece, and further communications relating to the Sovereignty of Greece, in the State Papers, Session 1830, vol. xxxii.

[2] 'The Early Years,' p. 393.

year 1825. Two Greeks were then commissioned to come to an understanding with him. They placed themselves in communication with Canning also, who, however, advised the Prince not to enter further into the subject, as he considered the state of affairs in Greece still too disturbed, and also thought that Leopold could be more useful in England.

The ideal halo which then surrounded Greece in the eyes of the world, did not fail to produce an impression on the Prince; calling strongly into play a certain vein of fancy and romance which existed in his character.

It was not, therefore, contrary to his wishes when in the year 1829 the matter was again mooted.

As early as the end of 1828 or the beginning of 1829, the ambassadors of the three Powers, Russia, France, and England, accredited to the Porte, who had left Constantinople after the battle of Navarino, seem to have asked the president, Capodistrias, whom he could recommend as Sovereign of Greece. In all probability, this took place at the conferences held at Poros, the result of which is contained in the Protocol of December 12, 1828, in which the ambassadors proposed an hereditary monarchy for Greece.[1] Capodistrias designated Prince Leopold, with whom he had

[1] Gervinus, vol. vi. p. 469.

long been acquainted. In the period between November 1828 and March 1829, the Prince was residing at Naples, and had opportunities of discussing the proposal of Capodistrias with the ambassadors who expressed themselves as favourable to it. He was already decided to accept eventually the call to Greece, but he cherished the natural desire that a formal invitation might reach him from that country. With this object he, in the beginning of May 1829, sent Charles Stockmar, the brother of his confidant, with a letter to the president.

To properly understand what follows, it must be remembered that not long before, on March 22,[1] the three Powers had come to the following resolutions at the London conference:—

1. Greece shall remain under the Suzerainty of the Porte, to which it shall pay tribute; and shall be governed by an hereditary Christian prince, who must not be a member of any of the reigning families of the allied Powers. The first election shall be made by the three Powers and the Porte in common accord.

2. The northern frontier of Greece shall extend

[1] Protocol of March 22, 1829. See Mendelssohn's 'Capodistrias,' p. 205, et seq.

from the Gulf of Volo to the Gulf of Arta; the Island of Eubœa and the Cyclades to belong to Greece.

3. The Greeks have at once to cease hostilities, and to withdraw their troops from the other side of the isthmus.

On May 26, the Prince's messenger arrived at Ægina.

'On the 27th,' he writes, 'I received notice to present myself to the president at 12 o'clock. I delivered my letter to him. After he had read it, he said to me, "I always keep to what I have once promised. The ambassadors were surprised when I proposed the Prince. They probably expected I should propose some one else. They wished that I should express myself in writing, but I declined to do so. My ambition is to give the country permanent institutions." I thereupon took up the conversation, and said as follows:

'"The Prince has spoken to the ambassadors of the three Powers in Naples. The ambassadors signified their approbation of your proposal, and have expressed themselves about it in a way most flattering to the Prince. The persons from whom the governments expect proposals are unanimous, and the moment for coming to a decision draws near.

'"The Prince has decided to accept the offer, but

only on two conditions. The first is, that Greece should have such frontiers as are necessary in order that it should take a place in the family of European states, and become a useful member of it. The second is, that he shall have well-founded hopes of raising the material and intellectual condition of a people, which appears to be debased through long-continued slavery.

'"But even if the Prince were satisfied on both these points, he could not, merely in virtue of the communication made to him by the ambassadors, go to the three Powers and say, 'Here I am, I am ready to undertake the task;' on the contrary, Greece must take the necessary steps to induce the Powers to come to an understanding with the Prince, by demanding him for its ruler. The Prince wishes this should take place as soon as possible. If the Powers then call upon the Prince for his declaration on the subject, he will naturally announce the conditions on which he would be willing to accept the throne. The Prince will make them in the interest of Greece, and I do not doubt that he will succeed in reconciling the divergent opinions of the three Powers."

'The president answered:

'"The observations which you make are very agreeable to me. Willingly would I lend a hand to the

fulfilling of the Prince's wishes, were not the contents of the Protocol of March 22 an insurmountable obstacle to my doing so. According to that Protocol, no voice is left to Greece, either in the choice of its future ruler, or in the settlement of the boundaries necessary for its defence. Greece, with the frontiers at present laid down, that is, without Samos and Candia, cannot well exist. Should the Porte cede the territory required, but not unite Samos and Candia to Greece, it is my determination rather to resign than to sign such a treaty; for I will not be a witness to the misery to which, under these circumstances, the country would be exposed. Meantime, the Porte will not willingly give up anything, and I trust that its refusal may bring the Powers to a decision more worthy of them. I beg the Prince to use his influence, that the islands of Samos and Candia may be added to the territory mentioned in the Protocol of March 22. For such a concession Greece would be willing to adopt a monarchical form of government, and would elect a king approved of by the Powers."

'I answered:

'That the Prince would willingly use his influence to serve the cause of Greece; but that without a distinct invitation on the part of the country, this would be extremely difficult to him.'

'He reflected for a moment, and then said:

'"I can do nothing but protest against the contents of the Protocol of March 22."

'I begged him to convey his ideas to the Prince in writing, and took my leave.'

Under date of May 30, we read in the Diary:

'At 7 o'clock in the evening I went to the president, to receive my despatches. He read to me the memorandum which he had prepared for the Prince, and then delivered it to me. The president repeated that he could not fulfil the desire expressed through me; and added that the Prince probably had not at the time of my departure been acquainted with the contents of the Protocol of March 22. I assured him of the contrary, and said that I could not exactly understand why Greece should hesitate to express to the Powers her wish that they should choose the Prince as ruler, after the ambassadors had already declared themselves in favour of the same.'

'He answered:

'"I might unquestionably lay the proposal before the Assembly about to meet at Argos, and I do not doubt that they would accept it, on condition that the Prince should bring with him Samos and Candia; but this proceeding would be too decidedly opposed to the contents of the Protocol of March 22, and

might have detrimental consequences for Greece. I should involve myself too much, if, without absolute necessity, I acted contrary to the wish of the Powers (*contrarier les Puissances*)."

'I begged him to explain more clearly to me what those detrimental consequences might be. He would not, however, proceed further with this subject, but went on to say:

'"If Samos and Candia are not united to Greece, I cannot advise the Prince to accept the Crown. The Greeks will not willingly see at their head a prince who comes to them under other conditions. Samos has for eight or nine years seen no enemy on its soil. Should this island fall again under the dominion of the Turks, the population must necessarily emigrate—they would take refuge in the Peloponnesus, piracy would begin again, and a constant petty warfare must be the result. Almost the same results would follow with regard to Candia. If Providence has designed the Prince to be the ruler of the country, I hope that he will not at once give the people a constitution, but only promise one. The Greeks are not at the present moment ripe for it; but I do not doubt that in the course of five or ten years, it would be possible to discuss the question with the people."'

These are all the details that Charles Stockmar's

Diary gives of his mission to Capodistrias. Still, as far as it goes, it is in many respects of importance.

In the first place it proves that Capodistrias had himself, as early as the end of 1828, or the beginning of 1829 (probably as early as the conferences at Poros), recommended Prince Leopold as a candidate to the Powers. This and the other statements of the narrative, complete and confirm what is related by Mendelssohn in his book on Capodistrias (p. 267), with regard to the Prince's negotiations with the latter through Stockmar's brother. The letter of the Prince dated March 24, delivered by Charles Stockmar,[1] confined itself from motives of prudence to asking for 'information on the future prospects of Greece,' and to expressing friendly anxiety as to the state of the President's health; and for the same reasons, the answer of Capodistrias of May 30, spoke of the future monarch of Greece, and what would be required of him, in a merely hypothetical manner and in general terms.

All this was a mere veil. The real pith of the matter, which appears for the first time in the verbal negotiations, was something more than a mere cautious sounding on the part of Leopold and circum-

[1] See 'Bétant, Corresp. du Comte Capodistrias,' vol. iii. p. 152.

spect precautionary measures on the side of Capodistrias, against a rival whom he suspected. Matters were really at a much more advanced stage. The president himself had already recommended Leopold as a candidate. Leopold was prepared to accept, and only wished for a demonstration in his favour, on the part of Greece, which the president would not consent to. This is in a few words the gist of Charles Stockmar's report.

The manner in which Capodistrias avoided compliance with the wish expressed to him by the Prince, gives rise to many reflections. If we consider the facts given by Gervinus (vi. pp. 545, et seq.), and by Mendelssohn (p. 272), it is impossible to resist the impression that Capodistrias, in his dealings with Leopold, played a double game, that he was double-tongued, and guilty of mental reservations. The diplomatic web of the president appears all the more entangled, when we remember the fact preserved in Charles Stockmar's report, that it was Capodistrias himself who had recommended Prince Leopold to the Powers. Capodistrias' secret ambition and his egotism kept up a constant underhand reaction against the foreign Prince whom he had himself proposed as the ruler of Greece. To bring about a public expression in favour of Leopold, on the part of the National Assembly,

would have been entirely opposed to these secret sentiments, he himself hoping to be raised to that exalted position; as was afterwards proved by the influence he exercised over the elections, and the manœuvres of his adherents in the National Congress.[1] It is particularly significant that he advised the Prince not to accept the Greek Crown without Samos and Candia, though he himself saw no hope of obtaining them.[2] From the purely objective point of view of the interests of Greece, it might perhaps have been said at that time, that an immediate declaration in favour of Prince Leopold's candidature was of no use. For the country the first and most important point was, how, with what frontiers, and under what conditions it should be constituted, in regard to Turkey: the person of the ruler was but a secondary consideration, so long as it continued uncertain over what and with what Power he was to rule. The practical conditions for the settlement of Greece, as laid down in the Protocol of March 22 were, or appeared to the Greeks, as not sufficiently favourable on many points. To make a formal declaration on the personal question at a time when the great Powers still took their stand

[1] Mendelssohn, p. 213, et. seq. 'Prokesch von Osten,' vol. ii. p. 368.

[2] Comp. Gervinus, p. 550.

on the basis of that Protocol, might appear all the more premature, as it might be anticipated that the Protocol, which in no wise assumed the character of an ultimatum, would not remain the 'dernier mot' of the Powers, and that the Greeks might expect a new turn of affairs in their favour from the continuation of the Russo-Turkish war.

On the other hand, it might be urged, that Leopold was not only without doubt the ablest[1] of all the candidates:[2] but, in consequence of his connection with England, the Power most hostile to the Greeks, he was in the best position to obtain in the course of the further negotiations, the relatively most advantageous conditions for Greece. Whoever on the part of Greece understood this, must, if consistent, have been desirous to help the Prince in his natural wish to obtain, as quickly as possible, a speedy declaration on the

[1] 'The choice of your Royal Highness,' writes Stein later on to the Prince, 'has answered the wishes of all the friends of Greece, as it has fallen on a prince who combines with high birth a calm and earnest temper, and a knowledge of business gained by participation in the great events of the time; who possesses that mildness which wins the hearts and softens the passions of men, and who is acquainted with the political institutions of constitutional countries; who, lastly, is independent of foreigners, and is therefore in a position to devote himself exclusively to the interests of his country.' Pertz 'Life of Stein,' vol. vi. chap. 2, p. 860.

[2] See the list in Gervinus, vol. vi. p. 533.

part of the Greek nation, and thus get the start of his competitors. That such a declaration could injure the interests of Greece, was an empty quibble of Capodistrias! He pretended to Charles Stockmar that a declaration of the National Assembly in favour of the candidature of the Prince, on condition that he brought Samos and Candia with him, would be offensive to (*contrarier*) the Powers, as deviating too far from the Protocol of March 22. But the only thing that could be offensive in such a declaration, would have been the demand for these additional territories. Yet what did Capodistrias himself do soon afterwards? He caused the National Assembly of Argos, which sat from July 23 to August 18, and which was entirely dependent on him, and wholly obedient to his dictation, to protest against the provisions of the Protocol of March 22, and to demand the territory claimed by the National Assembly of Epidauros in the year 1826, viz., besides the Peloponnesus and the continent, Eubœa, Candia, the Archipelago, and all the provinces which had taken up arms, and submitted to the Greek government. Thus the narrative of Charles Stockmar is a new proof that Capodistrias was playing the Prince false.

A few months later (September 14, 1829), the Peace of Adrianople secured the existence of Greece,

the Sultan acceding to the Treaty of London of 1827, and the Protocol of March 22. The London Conference now began its work afresh, in order definitively to settle the conditions under which Greece should be constituted. The result of these negotiations, which lasted many months, was the Protocol of February 3, 1830, which, as compared with the Protocol of March, was so far more favourable to Greece that it gave her absolute independence under an hereditary Christian prince: but on the other hand, less favourable in so far as it drew the frontier line diagonally from the mouth of the Aspropotamos to that of the Sperchius, through Livadia; and left about a third of that province to Turkey. In a second Protocol of the same day the Powers requested Prince Leopold to accept the Greek throne; and we have now to examine retrospectively the principal points in the history of his candidature beginning from the Peace of Adrianople.

Russia from an early date showed herself favourable to the Prince; on November 20, 1829, he also received the acquiescence of the King of France.[1]

Greater difficulties were made in England. King

[1] See Letter of Lord Aberdeen of January 31, 1830, in the communications with H.R.H. Prince Leopold, laid before the British Parliament.

George IV., as Prince Leopold himself relates in his 'Reminiscences,' was at that time very much under the influence of his brother, the Duke of Cumberland (afterwards King Ernest Augustus of Hanover), who was bitterly opposed to the Duke of Wellington's Administration. He had in this Greek affair a candidate of his own, Duke Charles of Mecklenburg, brother of the Duchess of Cumberland, whom he caused to be warmly supported by George IV., whilst the English Ministry on their side at first proposed the Prince of the Netherlands. In January 1830, however, the Ministry adopted the candidature of Prince Leopold, and forced the King to accept it by threatening to resign. This was, as Leopold himself says, a misfortune for the Greek cause, as it made it impossible for the Prince to demand with uncompromising insistance, from a Cabinet which had staked its existence on his candidature, those conditions which the interests of Greece required.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that this unfavourable position was connected with the more general mistake committed by Leopold, against the decided advice of Stockmar, in not from the first taking up a perfectly correct attitude in regard to this Greek affair.

The prospect of the Hellenic Throne appears to

have possessed so great a charm for him that he began by industriously canvassing for it, allowing the British Ministry to compromise themselves in regard to his candidature, and only afterwards weighed the difficulties of the undertaking, only afterwards sought to obtain from the Powers the conditions upon which, as Stockmar told him, he ought from the first to have made his candidature depend.

The faultiness of this position was already apparent in January 1830, even before the Greek throne had been officially offered to the Prince by the Powers, or the Protocol of February 3 had been formally drawn up. On both points, however, an understanding had been come to. Matters being in this position, the Prince, on January 30, expressed himself verbally to Lord Aberdeen to the effect that he was not inclined to accept the offer of the throne, unless the Powers were ready to add Candia to the territory already granted. The very curt answer given by Lord Aberdeen on January 31,[1] throws great light upon the situation. 'Of Candia,' says his Lordship, 'there has not hitherto, on any occasion, been a question. Your Royal Highness is free, notwithstanding all that has passed, to decline

[1] 'Communications,' p. 1.

the sovereignty of Greece, but the exclusion of Candia cannot offer any satisfactory explanation of such a decision. Your Royal Highness must consider how little such a course would be compatible with the real dignity and consistency of your own character. The Powers have no intention whatever of negotiating with your Royal Highness. They expect a simple acceptance of their proposal, and would consider a conditional acceptance as a virtual refusal.'

The right answer to this would have been to say in the most decided and unmistakable terms, 'You yourself admit that I am not yet bound; I shall therefore reply to the eventual offer of the Powers as I deem right; and should my answer consist of only a conditional acceptance, it must be left to the Powers to consider this a virtual refusal.'

The idea, however, of an eventual refusal appears at that time to have been still altogether absent from the Prince's thoughts, and so he answered on February 3, as it appears to us, with not sufficient decision, that everything that had taken place up to that time, had as yet led him to expect that he should be at liberty finally to give such a conditional or unconditional answer as, on mature reflection, he should think proper; and he could not believe it to be the

intention of the Powers, that the future ruler of Greece should enter upon his functions, by an unconditional surrender to their dictates, not only of himself, but of his duty towards Greece.

The irritation betrayed in the tone of Lord Aberdeen's correspondence with Leopold is especially remarkable. It is to be accounted for by the following circumstances. Among political persons the Prince kept up intimate personal relations with some of the most prominent members of the Opposition; relations which he had inherited from his deceased wife, viz., with Lords Durham, Dover, Palmerston, Brougham, Lansdowne, and with Mr. Ellis, and Mr. Abercromby, afterwards Lord Dunfermline. It was no secret that he consulted Lord Durham specially in regard to all questions of importance, and it even appears from the 'Reminiscences' of King Leopold in Queen Victoria's book,[1] that he expected assistance in this Greek business from the members of the Parliamentary Opposition. The Tory Ministry, who were already not very favourably disposed towards the Prince, were naturally rendered distrustful and suspicious by this connection with the Opposition. In his letter of January 31, 1830, Lord Aberdeen gives

[1] 'Early Years,' p. 395.

it clearly to be understood, that Leopold is acting under the advice of persons hostile to the Ministry.[1]

It was still possible for the Prince to make his acceptance depend on certain conditions, and, in fact, he attempted to do so, when the Protocol of February 3, with the offer of the Greek crown, was officially communicated to him.

On February 11, he addressed to the plenipotentiaries of the Conference a written answer to the following effect:[2]

'Il s'empresse d'accepter la carrière utile et honorable que les Hautes Puissances lui offrent. Cependant ce serait mal répondre à la confiance qu'Elles daignent placer en lui et se rendre coupable des suites que la non-réussite de l'œuvre . . . pourrait entraîner, s'il donnait son adhésion sans les *conditions* qui lui paraissent indispensables pour le succès de la cause qu'il doit entreprendre. . . . Il doit *stipuler* qu'il soit arrêté dans le Traité qui doit être définitivement conclu à Londres, ou dans les articles additionnels de ce Traité ce qui suit.'

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[1] 'British and Foreign State Papers,' 1829–30, p. 455. 'However these sentiments may accord with the political objects of persons in this country by whom your Royal Highness may have been advised,' &c.

[2] 'Communications,' p. 12.

Here follow five conditions:

1. Perfect guarantee for the Greek State, as well as the promise of protection in case of hostile attack.

2. Protection of the inhabitants of Crete and Samos, against oppressive and reactionary measures on the part of Turkey, after their return to Turkish rule.

3. A better frontier to the north.

4. Promise of pecuniary assistance, until the resources of Greece shall have been developed.

5. Assistance of allied troops, until he shall himself be in a position to organise an army.

In conclusion, the Prince states that it would give him lively satisfaction if the Powers would grant to the Greeks the right 'd'objecter contre sa personne s'ils le jugent à propos.'

The Conference, however, would not hear of conditions, and the Prince allowed himself to be persuaded to withdraw his letter. On February 15, a verbal explanation took place between him and the plenipotentiaries, and on the 16th he addressed to them a note,[1] in which he says that, after the verbal declarations given to him, he considered:

'1. Le point 1 concernant la garantie comme assuré.

[1] 'Communications,' p. 15.

'2. Le point 2 (guarantees for the inhabitants of Candia and Samos) comme amplement accordé.

'3. Le point 3, concernant la frontière à l'ouest, il remet entièrement à la considération généreuse des Hautes Puissances.'

In regard to points 4 and 5, however, he declares that he is determined only to accept the offer made to him, if he be assured of assistance in the way of money and troops.

But this note, likewise, the Prince allowed himself to be persuaded to withdraw.

On February 22, Lord Aberdeen presented him with an altered draft of his first letter of February 11, as one which would be agreeable to the Conference, and the Prince accepted this letter in a note to Lord Aberdeen of February 23, with the diplomatic proviso, that should the plenipotentiaries attach much importance to the proposed modifications, he should out of courtesy to them be ready to adopt them.

This modified version, which, as the definite answer of the Prince, was antedated February 11, and appended to the Protocol of February 20,[1] differs

[1] The protocol of February 20 must also be antedated, as the draft of it was only communicated to the Prince by Lord Aberdeen on the 22nd. See 'Communications,' p. 19.

from the original document in two small, but essential, points.

1. That which was before recorded as a *condition* or *stipulation* on the part of the Prince, now appears under the modest title of an *observation*, and

2. The concluding paragraph respecting the permission to be granted to the Greeks to object to his election, is entirely omitted.

Thus the Prince had allowed himself to drift altogether away from the only correct mode of proceeding, viz., of only accepting the Greek Crown under certain definite conditions. He had *formally* accepted unconditionally, and had changed conditions into 'observations,' the consideration of which, even on the point of the frontier line was left altogether to the discretion of the Powers. The Conference answered the 'observation' of the Prince with reference to the regulation of the frontier by the following passage in the Protocol of February 20: 'La Conférence a reconnu qu'il existait des obstacles insurmontables à revenir sur les décisions relatives à la démarcation des limites du nouvel état.'

In a letter of February 28, to Capodistrias (Further Communications relating to the Sovereignty of Greece) Leopold justifies himself by the following consideration: 'Si je n'avais pris en considération que ma

position personnelle, j'aurais insisté sur des conditions plus favorables ou je n'aurais pas accepté. Mais la crainte de rejeter toute la question grecque dans le chaos dont elle sortait m'a fait faire le sacrifice de mes vues personnelles.'

However, he soon appears to have repented his precipitate acceptance of the February Protocol.

Every subsequent attempt by the Prince to recover his lost position *vis-à-vis* of the Conference, was necessarily fruitless. He made an attempt of this kind on March 7, and wrote to Lord Aberdeen,[1] that though he had from motives of courtesy agreed to the answer as it had been modified in point of form by the Conference, his adhesion to the Protocol was only to be understood, according to the tenour and spirit of his original note of February 11, and every departure from those conditions would release him from all obligations. He insisted at the same time afresh on a better frontier to the north. Lord Aberdeen's objection that it was impossible to appeal from a letter signed and officially annexed to the Protocol, to the terms of another letter which had been withdrawn, was unanswerable, and Leopold had once more to yield, and withdraw his last communication to Lord

[1] 'Communications,' p. 24.

Aberdeen, and substitute for it another dated March 15, touching a guaranteed loan from the Powers.

He asked from the Powers for a guaranted loan of sixty millions of francs. And here again the difficulties came principally from the side of England, which would not undertake a guarantee for more than 500,000*l.*, that is, 12½ millions of francs. On March 25, the Prince declared that if his proposals for the loan were refused, he must decline the throne. Whilst these disagreeable negotiations were going on, the Prince, at the beginning of April, proceeded to Paris, and left Stockmar during the period of his absence as his chargé d'affaires at the Conference.[1]

His sojourn at Paris had as its principal object the negotiation of the loan, but in addition to this it would appear, (although our materials say nothing on the subject) that the Prince desired to obtain the hand of a Princess of Orleans. According to the report of Prince Lieven, contained in the despatch of May 20, already alluded to, the French Court rejected

[1] Letter of the Prince to the Plenipotentiaries of the Conference, dated April 4, 1830. 'Communications,' p. 30. 'Le soussigné a l'honneur d'informer les P.P. qu'il a fait choix du Baron de Stockmar, gentilhomme de sa maison, pour être, en cas de besoin, son chargé d'affaires pendant son absence de Londres.'

his proposal. Whether this was so or not, the difficulties with which he had till then had to contend, had already considerably cooled and sobered him. This mood appears in his letter of April 10 to Stein,[1] in which he speaks of the 'hard struggle carried on for months against ill-will and a mistaken policy, so that one's very soul is chilled within one;' of the 'vain and obstinate men' with whom he had had to negotiate; of the 'miserable way' in which the frontiers had been defined; of his discussions with the Powers respecting the loan to be guaranteed, which the 'melancholy state of Greece rendered necessary if any results were to be expected.' 'It is possible,' he says, 'that this may bring the matter to a rupture.'

At the end of the month of April, the news of the serious illness of George IV. brought him back to England; and here he learnt that the allied Powers had at last consented to guarantee a Greek loan, to the amount demanded by him. Shortly afterwards various and extensive reports from Count Capodistrias reached the Prince, together with other letters and news from Greece; all of them having reference to the way in which the February Protocol had been there received. If we look through the 'Communications'

[1] Pertz, vol. vi. chap. 2, p. 866.

and 'Further Communications'[1] the reports sent by the Greek president, together with the summary of the news received at the time, as given by Prokesch von Osten, and Mendelssohn,[1] we obtain the results in a few words, as follows: Loud complaints of the February Protocol, the provisions of which the Greeks do not accept of their own accord, but only submit to as forced on them. The excitement very violent, so that an insurrection is to be apprehended. Complaints that no voice was allowed to Greece in the settlement of her own destiny: many hostile utterances in regard to the person of the Prince. On the part of Capodistrias and the senate, the expression, it is true, of satisfaction at his having been selected, and at his having accepted, but at the same time references to the almost 'insurmountable difficulties' which he would find; and the expression of a fear that he would not be received favourably, unless amongst other things, he became a convert to the Greek religion. The provisions of the Protocol respecting the frontiers, and the stipulations as to the arrangements to be come to between the Turks and Greeks, are represented as disastrous, and not to be

[1] 'State Papers. Affairs of Greece,' vol. xxxii. 1830.

[2] 'Revolt of the Greeks,' vol. ii. p. 397, and Mendelssohn, pp. 272–292.

carried out except by force. Greece was reduced to her last shilling; poverty, misery, privation, despair, would await the Prince on his arrival.

It may readily be conceived that this picture was calculated to discourage the Prince. That it cannot be called an untrue picture, is admitted by Prokesch von Osten[1] and Gervinus,[2] who in other respects differ from each other, particularly in their opinion of Capodistrias. The nearly forty years which followed, have shown that Greece, even under more favourable conditions than those obtained at that time by Leopold, has yielded no brilliant results in its internal condition, and the possibility of her development must be considered as problematical even at the present day.

On May 15, the Prince communicated to the plenipotentiaries the documents he had received from Capodistrias, and called their attention to the grounds for hesitation which they suggested, viz., the dangers arising from the non-consultation of the Greeks in regard to their own destiny, and from the decisions that had been arrived at with reference to the frontiers; he also pointed out the impossible conditions upon which, according to Capodistrias, his favourable re-

[1] Prokesch von Osten, vol. ii. pp. 410–412, and Gervinus, vol. vi. p. 549.

ception depended; and the odious task it would be *to force* the Greeks to accept an arrangement which they had distinctly refused, and even regarded in a hostile spirit. In conclusion, he requested the Conference to consider whether the determination arrived at by them, could, without undergoing considerable changes, be conducive to the true interests of the Powers or to those of Greece, and he prepared them for the possibility of his declining the mission he had undertaken.

The plenipotentiaries endeavoured in vain to calm Leopold. In a letter to the Conference of May 21, he declined finally;[1] once more urging that the Greek nation was decidedly and irrevocably

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[1] 'Communications,' p. 56. It is worth while to notice what the Russian Plenipotentiary Prince Lieven says on the subject in his report of May 28, 1830 ('Recueil,' p. 619): 'Jusqu'ici toute la correspondance du prince avait été rédigée en français, et probablement par lui-même ou tout au plus avec l'aide de son médecin et conseiller intime M. Stockmar (sic !). (Stockmar, it should be noted, had, as Prince Lieven, who was constantly in Prince Leopold's house, very well knew, ceased for more than ten years to be Leopold's physician.) Mais sa dernière note, rédigée en anglais et par une plume évidemment plus exercée, démontre que ses vues en Angleterre l'ayant fait dès longtems renoncer à la Grèce, il a déjà en cette occasion pris conseil de ses nouveaux alliés.' Clearly an allusion to the relations which existed between the Prince and the members of the English Opposition.

hostile to the conditions laid down by the Powers, and that he could not bring his mind to force himself upon a people who were averse to him, or make himself the instrument in carrying out an arrangement to which the Greeks objected, and to which it would be necessary to force them.[1]

The letter which Leopold addressed on June 10, to Stein[2] should be compared with his communication to the Conference.

'Everything has been spoilt, and yet they will probably be forced after all to alter the frontiers. For what man of honour will undertake the sovereignty, with the pledge to drive the Greeks out of Acarnania and Etolia, in the full and quiet possession of which they find themselves? From the moment that the Greeks recognised the proposed arrangement as one fatal to their best interests, and the Powers were determined to alter nothing, it became difficult, if not

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[1] In his communication to the Conference of May 21, the Prince lays particular stress upon his never having given the Greeks reason to believe that he would go over to the Greek Church. According to Stockmar's verbal statements, Leopold had only promised the Greeks that his children would be educated in the Greek faith, but that he himself would not change his religion; the same principle on which he afterwards acted in Belgium.

[2] Pertz, vol. vi. chap. 2, p. 870.

impossible, to expect success; and one would have been placed in the melancholy position of being able to please neither party; whilst both would have endeavoured to throw the blame upon the Sovereign, and to accuse him of incapacity. This is what you preached to me the last time we spoke on the subject, viz., *not to accept the undertaking without the sufficient means to secure success.* I pass no judgment upon those who have unwisely denied me the necessary means; the trouble recoils on their own heads.'

The decision arrived at by the Prince has been for the most part very severely blamed. He has been condemned, partly on the ground of the motives alleged by himself, partly on the ground of motives of personal ambition, imputed to him.

'Le prince Léopold,' writes the Russian diplomatist Count Matuszewicz,[1] 'a montré tant d'arrière-pensées, tant de mauvaise foi, tant d'irrésolution, que je suis de ceux qui se félicitent de ne pas le voir chargé du gouvernement d'un pays où il aurait trahi la confiance des trois cours . . . puisqu'il n'est pas de difficulté qui ne l'effraie, pas d'obstacle qui ne l'arrête, pas de démarche qui ne prouve qu'il eût apporté en Grèce du dégoût, de la pusillanimité, et le perpétuel

[1] 'Recueil,' p. 610.

regret d'avoir abandonné ses prétendues chances au poste éminent de Régent d'Angleterre. . . . C'est cette Régence qu'il n'obtiendra jamais, surtout après avoir ainsi consommé sa honte. . . . Un pareil souverain aurait fait injure à la royauté.'

Prince Lieven [1] represents to his government, though in more measured language, that the letter, (cette inconcevable pièce) in which the Prince announced to the Conference his resolution to decline the Crown, only contains empty and easily-refuted pretences. The Prince had accepted the decisions of the Conference unconditionally, and had abandoned all his original objections to them. He could not appeal to the pretended objection of the Greeks to the Protocol, as he had given his adherence to that Protocol, which bore written on its face that it would brook no opposition either on the part of the Turks or of the Greeks. Nor was he free to say that he would not force himself upon the Greeks, for according to the Protocol to which he had adhered, he was a Sovereign to be imposed upon them if necessary by a superior Power. In all the arguments of that note Prince Lieven sees nothing but 'mauvaise foi, le cachet d'une intention coupable' and does not doubt

[1] 'Recueil,' p. 619.

that the real motive of Leopold's refusal is to be found in his hopes of the Regency in England. Stein [1] replies to the letter in which Leopold announced to him his determination to resign, as follows:

'When in 1812 the Emperor Alexander entered upon his struggle with Napoleon, he took for his motto "Confiance en Dieu, courage, persévérance, union," and with "the eye of faith which boldly and undazzled looks up to heaven" he surrendered himself to the inspirations of his large-hearted, noble soul, and hurled the giant to the ground. Human reason can see what lies immediately before it, but cannot penetrate through the obscurity of the distant future. There we must be guided by our sense of duty, by trust in God, and by casting away all selfishness.'

Stein expressed his displeasure with the Prince in yet stronger terms to others. He wrote to the Archbishop of Cologne: [2]

'What does your Eminence say to the behaviour of Prince Leopold? It is quite in the character of the Marquis "Peu-à-peu" as King George IV. christened him; instead of conquering difficulties, instead of completing the work he had undertaken, he withdraws

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[1] Pertz, vol. vi. chap. 2, p. 871.
[2] Ibid., p. 932.

like a coward his hand from the plough, and calculates the possible chances which the approaching death of King George IV. may throw in his way. A man of this weak character is totally unfit to play a bold part in life. He has no colour.'

And then again to Gagern :[1]

'He had a feeling that he would be unable to carry out this undertaking, and threw a side glance upon his probable influence in England, which, however, in consequence of the weakness of his character, he will never obtain, and which as soon as Princess Victoria grows up, that is, within six or seven years, he must lose.'

Gervinus, in the sixth volume of his 'History of the Nineteenth Century,' p. 538, admits the force of the reasons publicly given by Prince Leopold for his withdrawal, but is of opinion that these were not his true motives, and likewise seeks for these in the prospect of the English regency. In an appendix to his seventh volume, he states that he had received rectifications from a source so deserving of respect, that he reserves to himself in a future edition to explain the conduct of the Prince as having been ruled more by the facts of the case than by personal motives. There

[1] Pertz, *loc. cit.*, p. 946.

remains, however, what he had said at p. 540, vol. vi. viz., 'that if the Prince had had better health, greater physical vigour, youthfulness, abnegation, and magnanimity, nothing would have made him hesitate to carry out his first determination, and that the difficulties and wearisome nature of his task and the obscurity in which the future was wrapt up, would not have frightened him, but would rather have acted as a spur.'

Mendelssohn (p. 299), delivers the following verdict:

'The Prince, if thoroughly persuaded of the pernicious character of the decisions come to by the Powers, ought never to have accepted a crown to which such conditions were attached; his withdrawal *after* his acceptance was unjustifiable. Even at the last moment, Prince Leopold might have taken a great and manly resolution and have accepted the crown because it was a crown of thorns; thus tearing asunder the network of intrigues which had been spun in order to scare him from his path. Instead, however, of annihilating the intrigues of his enemies, he used them to hide his own irresolution, and the sudden change which had taken place in the objects of his ambition. Instead of quickly and boldly setting himself to accomplish the difficult but inspiriting task, he played for months together with the hopes of a

nation in the throes of despair, and pretended to regard the President Capodistrias as its true organ, after the public opinion of Greece had condemned the system of that statesman.'

If we on our side endeavour impartially to estimate the conduct of the Prince by the light of the authenticated facts, we must begin by admitting that he cannot be absolved from the charge of inconsistency. This implies that at a given moment he made a mistake, and the question to be answered is, whether the mistake was committed at the commencement or at the conclusion of the negotiation ; i.e., when he accepted or when he refused the Greek Crown. We must remember that inconsistency as such does not necessarily involve moral guilt. Unbending consistency can under certain circumstances be Quixotism or madness.

First, then, we have to ask, what were the real and true motives of the Prince's withdrawal.

Here we are able to assert in virtue of the repeated and detailed assurances given by Stockmar, in the records which we possess, that the prospect of the English regency was not the motive which determined the Prince's conduct.

When the sixth volume of Gervinus appeared, Stockmar expressed himself energetically in the circle

of his intimate friends to the effect that practical considerations and not ambitious hopes determined his master's conduct on the occasion. It was Stockmar's desire that the truth should be established on this point, and it is to be presumed that he originated the rectifications adverted to in the seventh volume of Gervinus.

The direct and express testimony borne by Stockmar in the latter years of his life, is supplemented by the indirect testimony to be collected out of his correspondence in the years 1829 and 1830, with his wife and his brother-in-law Opitz, afterwards councillor in Coburg. In his letters to his wife, Stockmar, when adverting to the Greek business, did not refer to the internal progress of the negotiation. For her the matter was only so far interesting as its settlement in one way, or the other, would have exercised a determining influence on the fate of her husband. Thus he wrote to her quite shortly either 'it is probable,' or 'it is not probable,' that the Prince will become Sovereign of Greece. These curt epistolary notices are valuable as showing the ups and downs of the scales in this Greek candidature. On November 26, 1829, we read, 'the Prince believes in the probability of success, I do not.' On December 18 and 25, and on January 2 following, we read, 'the thing is probable.'

On February 14, 'highly probable.' On February 25, 'The Prince does really go to Greece.' On March 19, difficulties are adverted to, which have already twice threatened shipwreck to the plan, and in a letter of March 23 to his brother-in-law Opitz, these are dwelt upon in greater detail, as follows :

'The conditions which the Prince made in accepting the Sovereignty of Greece, meet in their detailed arrangement and application with such difficulties, that although it is not probable, it is yet possible, that he will find himself in the end obliged to give up the whole scheme.'

From April 1, he several times states to his wife, that the matter had become uncertain. On May 20, that the withdrawal of the Prince was probable, and on May 25, that this withdrawal had for some days past been decided upon.

The decisive point is that Stockmar, as early as the middle of March, and therefore a whole month before the illness of the King, which alone could have excited any hopes of a regency, speaks of the possible breaking off of the negotiations on account of practical difficulties. This is in exact accordance with a letter from Leopold to Stein, of April 10 (written, therefore, before the alarming illness of George IV.), in which he speaks of the possibility of his withdrawing,

on the question of the frontier and the guaranteed loan.

Let us now, in conclusion, ask what were these hopes of a regency? It was, to begin with, as the sequel proved, exceedingly uncertain whether there would be any regency at all; in the next place, in the event of there being one, there was no probability of its lasting more than a very few years; and lastly, it was wholly uncertain whether it would devolve upon the Prince.

When George IV. died, the next heir was the Duke of Clarence, then sixty-five years old, who could, therefore, very easily live ten years more, and who, in fact, did live seven years. In seven years Princess Victoria, who was then eleven, would attain her majority. It was probable, therefore, as did actually happen, that she would attain her majority during the lifetime of the Duke of Clarence (William IV.), or in case she did not, that the regency would last but a very short time. Moreover, there were far more likely candidates for the regency than Leopold, viz., the mother of the future Queen, the Duchess of Kent; and two English princes, the uncles of the Princess, the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge.[1]

[1] The Duke of Cumberland, as next heir to the Hanoverian throne, could not be taken into consideration.

Therefore, for the uncertain and improbable prospect of a regency, which could under no circumstances have lasted above a few years, and for the very precarious influence which such a regency, especially in England, and above all in the hands of a foreigner, was likely to afford, it is pretended that Prince Leopold, whom no one ever accused of being deficient in insight and in the power of accurately gauging political facts, gave up the Greek throne! and this is maintained by persons who take pains to point out the uncertainty, improbability, and meagreness of the prospect,[1] and who were perfectly aware of the romantic passion with which the Prince had for two years pursued his Greek idea! This kind of judgment would be incomprehensible, if experience did not teach us, that the preponderating tendency of mankind is to put an unfavourable construction on the actions of others. In order to satisfy this craving, men do not hesitate to credit persons known for the soundness of their understanding, with calculations diametrically opposed to common sense. In the present case, there is the additional consideration, that owing to the nature of the circumstances, diplomatists were the source from which this analysis of Leopold's

[1] Cf. the opinions above expressed by Lieven, Matuszewicz, and Stein.

motives was derived, i.e., men whose professional training begets the habit of never seeing anything in a simple and natural light, of always suspecting a hidden motive, especially one of personal ambition; and whose occupation gives rise to pretensions of seeing through everything, and of knowing everything. Whoever has had the opportunity of standing behind the scenes, and of afterwards reading the current diplomatic reports of what has taken place, will not have failed to laugh at the refined subtleties, which are after all only hypotheses served up as facts.

We can, therefore, safely assert that the speculation as to the regency was not the Prince's motive; a simple and natural examination of the facts seems to us to give the following results.

The Prince may at first have underrated the difficulties arising from the state of affairs in Greece itself, as well as those which the policy of the Powers superadded; and so given himself up to hope in too sanguine a temper. Having put himself forward as candidate for the Greek throne, and having incurred a heavy debt of gratitude to the English Ministry for the support vouchsafed by them to his candidature, he found himself in an unfavourable and weak position, *vis-à-vis* of the Powers. With regard to them, every-

thing depended upon his putting forward and manfully defending the conditions which the nature of the circumstances rendered necessary. In order to neutralise this disadvantageous position, it was necessary for him to maintain an exceptionally firm and correct attitude, but instead of this, he allowed himself to turn a deaf ear to Stockmar's warning, and to be manœuvred out of this position by the diplomatists. Now diplomatists are, for the most part, a frivolous, superficial, and rather ignorant set of people, whose first object it always is to lull matters to sleep for a few years, and to patch up things for a time. The distant future troubles them but little. They console themselves with such maxims as 'alors comme alors,' 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' With statesmen of this kind it is sorry work discussing the conditions of a new political creation, to be carried out under difficult circumstances. They have no real conception what work of this kind means. To those who point out the difficulties they reply, 'It will all come right in time,' or they attempt to throw dust in their eyes by vague promises. The difficulty of the Prince's position towards the Conference was increased by a fault in the method which he had employed; again, contrary to Stockmar's advice. A prince should never negotiate in his own

person, but always by means of a plenipotentiary, who should act as his shield, and whom he can, if necessary, disavow; whereas Prince Leopold allowed himself to be led into verbal communications with the Conference. The disadvantage at which he was thereby placed, became plain to him in the course of the negotiation. When Lord Aberdeen, on May 1, announced to him that the Powers had agreed to guarantee the loan of sixty millions, and that the plenipotentiaries wished to communicate this to him *vivâ voce*, he refused to receive them, and desired to be informed in writing, saying,[1] 'les désavantages provenant d'un semblable mode de communication sont en vérité trop majeurs et sont retombés jusqu'ici exclusivement et je dois ajouter aussi, sévèrement sur moi.'

By means of these personal negotiations the diplomatists succeeded in forcing Leopold from a position which was inconvenient to them, but which was the only correct one for him, and which he at first made some show of maintaining, viz., that of making his acceptance of the crown depend on certain conditions, especially as regarded the question of the frontiers. It seems probable that the plenipotentiaries told him that the Powers could not have conditions dictated to them,

[1] Report of May 2, 'Communications,' p. 31.

that the best thing he could do was to accept what was offered, and so trust that the future would set things right: that if he did not accept them, the whole Greek business would fall back (as Leopold himself expressed it in his letter to Capodistrias) into its original chaos. It is possible that Leopold believed that he would be able, in the course of the negotiations, to win back the ground he had lost; and it is certain that he did not at the time appreciate to its full extent the disadvantageous light in which the Protocol of February would appear in the eyes of the Greeks themselves. The position once lost, however, was not to be recovered. In regretful terms Leopold writes to Stein [1] that a more favourable result might have been attained 'if I had not been intreated and stormed out of my views in January.'

Months were consumed in dreary negotiations with the Powers, as to the execution of the conditions which the latter were ready to *concede* to the Prince, negotiations which, as he writes to Stein, 'chilled the soul within him,' and took all heart out of him. It was with the utmost difficulty that he extorted the means necessary for the fulfilment of his task, whilst simultaneously becoming more and more convinced that they would not suffice for this fulfilment. On the top

[1] Pertz, *loc. cit.*, p. 870.

of all this came news from Greece, which showed the state of affairs there to be beset with even greater difficulties than he had apprehended, the means at his disposal to be even less adapted to the ends in view, and the chances of success therefore more than ever doubtful. That under such circumstances the Prince withdrew, appears to us to afford a signal proof of the superiority of his understanding, of his prudence, and of his wisdom. He had in accepting the Protocol of February committed a mistake, he abstained from adding a yet greater one to it by obstinately keeping to the wrong road, after he had become aware that it was not leading him to the goal he had in view.

The diplomatists, 'whose want of understanding had cut off the means of success,' appear in no favourable light when they say, he had known the conditions of the Powers, and make an outcry about his fickleness and want of good faith. In a matter of the gravest responsibility, to hold a man to the letter of an engagement hurriedly entered into, ill became men who were the cause of the hurry. The diplomatists were themselves obliged later on to acknowledge the inadequacy of the February Protocol, and to concede to another prince the conditions they had refused to Leopold.

Stein's attacks upon the Prince as wanting in a feeling of duty, trust in God, unselfishness and courage, are pretty well neutralised by what he says in another place, that Leopold had a feeling that he would be unable to carry out his undertaking. An unconditional duty to become King of Greece surely did not exist. Would it have been real trust in God or real courage to undertake this duty without the feeling or the hope of success? Or shall we make it a matter of reproach to the Prince that he was destitute of the hope of success? On such a theory every adventure and every quixocry would be raised to the dignity of a duty. The utter absurdity of Stein's comparison with the Emperor Alexander does not deserve to be dwelt upon.

Very curious also is Mendelssohn's desire that the Prince should have accepted the Greek crown *because* it was a crown of thorns; therefore, as it were, on ascetic principles.

If anybody is of opinion with Gervinus that the Prince, from deficiency of innate vigour, would not have been the right man for Greece, and that his instinct made him shrink from the task,[1] this is no ground for censure.

[1] The rather malicious remarks in an article of the 'Quarterly Review' (October 1830), 'The Greek Question,' take this line.

It must be left to the conscience of an earnest man to determine what are the tasks to which he feels himself equal, and if he withdraws from a task, for the fulfilment of which he does not conceive that he has sufficient means, either within himself or outside himself, he acts in a wise and praiseworthy manner. If in so doing he retracts a former hasty step, he thereby proves himself to be a man of prudence as opposed to an adventurer, a dreamer, or a fool, who sacrifices himself to a theory of consistency, without being able effectually to serve or promote the cause to which he wishes to be of use.

How great was the attraction which the Greek scheme possessed for Leopold was often shown in later years. Not only in the earlier period of his reign in Belgium, and when it would have been natural that the feeling of the precariousness of a position acquired with so much toil and trouble should occasionally master him, but even afterwards, when this position had been secured, and great political results had been attained, Leopold used at times to be overcome with a feeling of regret that the Greek plan had not been realised. Greece, he used on those occasions to say, would have satisfied his phantasy and the political requirements of his nature more than the prosaic affairs of Belgium. He expressed sentiments

of this kind on repeated occasions to Stockmar, who answered him once as follows in a letter which lies before us :—

'For the poetry which Greece would have afforded, I am not inclined to give very much. Mortals see only the bad side of the things they have, and the good side of the things they have not. That is the whole difference between Greece and Belgium, though I do not mean to deny that, when the first King of Greece shall after all manner of toils have died, his life may not furnish the poet with excellent matter for an epic poem.'

CHAPTER VI.

WELLINGTON.

1829–1852.

Stockmar's unfavourable opinion of Wellington as Prime Minister—Wellington's influence in placing Polignac in the French Ministry—How he was deceived in Polignac, and the results of his policy—Stockmar's later opinion of Wellington, after the latter had withdrawn from active political life.

THE candidature of Prince Leopold for the Greek throne coincided in point of time with the Wellington Administration. The active share taken by Stockmar in that affair gave him the wished-for opportunity of accurately studying the Duke's capacities as a statesman. As we have already seen in our chapter on Claremont, he was strongly prejudiced in his favour, and felt great interest in him.

Several fragments in Stockmar's papers show that he was occupying himself about the year 1830 with the composition of an exhaustive memoir on the character of the Duke of Wellington. His opinion of him had fallen lower and lower. We will subjoin a few passages from one of these fragments :—

On Wellington.

'The way in which Wellington would preserve and husband the rewards of his own services and the gifts of fortune, I took as the measure of the higher capabilities of his mind. It required no long time, however, and no great exertion, to perceive that the natural sobriety of his temperament, founded upon an inborn want of sensibility, was unable to withstand the intoxicating influence of the flattery by which he was surrounded. The knowledge of himself became visibly more and more obscured. The restlessness of his activity, and his natural lust for power, became daily more ungovernable.

'Blinded by the language of his admirers, and too much elated to estimate correctly his own powers, he impatiently and of his own accord abandoned the proud position of the victorious general, to exchange it for the most painful position which a human being can occupy—viz. the management of the affairs of a great nation with insufficient mental gifts and inadequate knowledge. He had hardly forced himself upon the nation as Prime Minister,[1] intending to add the

[1] Wellington was Prime Minister from January 1828 to November 1830.

glory of a statesman to that of a warrior, when he succeeded, by his manner of conducting business, in shaking the confidence of the people. With laughable infatuation he sedulously employed every opportunity of proving to the world the hopeless incapacity which made it impossible for him to seize the natural connection between cause and effect. With a rare *naïveté* he confessed publicly and without hesitation the mistaken conclusions he had come to in the weightiest affairs of State ; mistakes which the commonest understanding could have discovered, which filled the impartial with pitying astonishment, and caused terror and consternation even among the host of his flatterers and partisans. Yet, so great and so strong was the preconceived opinion of the people in his favour, that only the irresistible proofs furnished by the man's own actions could gradually shake this opinion. It required the full force and obstinacy of this strange self-deception in Wellington, it required the full measure of his activity and iron persistency, in order at last, by a perpetual reiteration of errors and mistakes, to create in the people the firm conviction that the Duke of Wellington was one of the least adroit and most mischievous Ministers that England ever had.'

One of the most marked instances of Wellington's

short-sightedness as a statesman, and one the most pregnant with evil consequences, was the support and encouragement which he gave to the accession of Polignac's Ministry in France. Amongst Stockmar's papers there is a memorandum on the subject which is not without interest:—

Wellington and Polignac.

August 4, 1830.

'For the historian it may be interesting to know how much influence Wellington had exercised on the present events in France.

'In July 1829,[1] the old Duchesse d'Escars, an Ultra-ultra, and an old friend of George IV., came to London. Madame du Cayla accompanied her. The Duchess was received by the King. Immediately afterwards the rumour was current in certain circles, that a change of Ministry was intended in France, and Polignac was named as the future Premier. Lord Holland maintained at the time, that this was

[1] According to Lord Palmerston's Journal—Sir H. Bulwer's 'Life of Palmerston,' i. p. 330—Wellington had as early as December 1828 written urgently to King Charles X. to allow Polignac to lay before him a report on the dangers of his (the King's) position—in other words, had recommended Polignac as Minister.

absolutely impossible. Nevertheless, the change did actually take place a few days later.[1]

'The Martignac Ministry was obnoxious to the Duke of Wellington on account of its Liberalism, especially in regard to foreign politics. He wished to see in the French Cabinet, men of his own way of thinking with regard to the affairs of Russia, Turkey, and Greece. He therefore used the great influence which he possessed over Charles X., who was already very favourable to Polignac, in order to effect a change of Ministry. He hoped that Polignac would have agreed with him in every question of foreign policy; but in doing so, he deceived himself entirely as to Polignac's own views; and even if this had not been the case, as the whole of France saw in Polignac a mere creature of Wellington's, this alone would have sufficed to compel the former to avoid every appearance of dependence upon the English Cabinet. The consequence was that Wellington found Polignac leaning much more than he had expected or wished on Russia.

'In the internal affairs of France, Polignac carried out his own insane policy. That Wellington gave the French Cabinet formal advice, in consequence of

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[1] Polignac undertook the Ministry on August 8, 1829.

which the measures were taken which have resulted in the present events (the July Revolution), I do not believe. But that George IV. and his Minister Wellington foresaw these measures, and approved of them,[1] and that Charles X. and his Ministers knew this, and were thereby confirmed and encouraged in their intentions, is my firm conviction. In proof of this I can cite the extraordinary statement made by George IV. to a distinguished person at the end of March 1830.

'"If," he said, with tears in his eyes, "Charles X. does not adhere to the path upon which he has entered, he is lost; and I fear he will be, because there are signs that many of his own courtiers are already advising him to abandon that path."

'This conviction of mine is strengthened by the fact that Charles X., at the end of April 1830, feared nothing so much as the overthrow of the Wellington Cabinet, and the loss of moral support in the carrying out of his views which he would thereby sustain.

'Wellington is the most short-sighted statesman that has existed for a long time. By his short-sightedness he has altered the entire position of European

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[1] See note, p. 131.

politics, and his measures have brought about in everything the exact reverse of what he intended.'

It is certain that the French Revolution of 1830 did change 'the whole position of European politics,' and that Wellington, therefore, by the aid he gave to the creation of the Polignac Ministry, did 'bring about the exact reverse of what he intended.' But that he likewise was most grossly mistaken in regard to Polignac's views with respect to England, and his foreign policy generally, is fully proved by the contents of the following remarkable document.

Before, however, we give this, we must anticipate a little; and as we shall have no opportunity further on of returning to Wellington, we must mention that, from about the year 1840, Stockmar saw more of the brighter qualities of the man. In this last period of his life, Wellington was no longer the one-sided, purblind partisan; he withdrew from the part of leader and regular, active participator in the political events of the day, and became more of the mediator and umpire, appealed to by all parties in important questions, especially those of a personal and social character. His great position, his experience, and his quick good sense fitted him peculiarly for this office. He was decidedly wanting in breadth of view

and depth of insight, and this side of his character is brought out strongly in the fragment we have given from Stockmar's papers: but he had a sharp eye for practical and proximate affairs—an eye, in riper age, no longer blinded by passion and the intoxication of self-esteem. In this later period Stockmar was often in a situation to call in the help of Wellington in various complicated affairs, and Wellington granted that assistance with his characteristic decision and fearlessness. He never hesitated about drawing blame on himself. There was no one in England he needed to be afraid of, and he knew this and congratulated himself on it. 'My back,' he often said, 'is broad enough to bear a good deal.' When Wellington died, in 1852, Stockmar lamented the loss of an universally recognised authority, which had latterly proved itself a firm support of the monarchy.

If we compare the judgments formed of Wellington by Stockmar at three different epochs of his life, we can only reconcile them by the converse of the ordinary proverb, 'One man is not fit for everything.' Wellington was great in the first period as a military commander; in the second, as a leading statesman, he was not up to his task; in the last period, he had again found an important and useful sphere of activity, thoroughly suited to his powers.

CHAPTER VII.

POLIGNAC'S PLAN FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MAP OF EUROPE.

1829.

The official document—Polignac's plan—Why it was not carried out—French ambition the same at all times.

THE following, which was found among Stockmar's papers, is an extract taken from the documents mentioned below, copies of which had been in his possession.

1. An exposé historique, emanating from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. A mémoire du prince Polignac présenté au Conseil, September 1829.

3. A note by the same for the use of the Council upon the relative value of Belgium and of the Rhine provinces to France.

4. A draft of a despatch from Polignac to the Duc de Mortemart, French Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

In August 1829 there was a general belief in the break up of the Ottoman Empire. Wellington and

Aberdeen shared in this belief. It is true that England and Austria would have gladly prevented this catastrophe, but how were they to induce France and Prussia to join in an alliance against Russia? 'Nous avons garanti,' says the exposé, 'à cette puissance (Russia), sous des conditions données, sa liberté d'action, comme elle avait garanti la nôtre en 1823' (Intervention in Spain).

Under these circumstances Metternich entered on a new system of tactics. He proposed at Berlin and at St. Petersburg a plan for the partition of Turkey, in which France was left out.

The Prussians (Bernstorff and Ancillon) called attention in their reply to the difficulties which would be caused by the opposing claims of the numerous candidates who would present themselves. They were of opinion that the phantom of a Turkish Empire should be kept up as long as possible.

Russia, on the other hand, addressed herself to France, and asked for her opinion. 'I do not wish the fall of Turkey,' said the Emperor Nicholas, 'but it is not to be averted; if France and Russia were to come to an understanding, they would be masters of the situation.'[1]

[1] The same arguments employed in our days by the same Emperor, in his celebrated interview with Sir Hamilton Seymour, only in another direction.

Prince Polignac advised that the Russian proposition should be entertained. His leading ideas were the following: In every combination connected with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the one object that must be kept in view is the breaking up of England's dominion of the sea. The Vienna Congress, whilst endeavouring to save the independence of the Continent, had committed the error of maintaining and strengthening England's maritime supremacy. Now was the time for France, in opposition to this, to reassert her ancient traditional policy of the freedom of the seas. England frightened the Continent with the phantom of Russia, and yet the offensive power of Russia had proved itself comparatively unimportant, whereas the navies of the whole world were no match for that of England. But the Vienna Congress had committed yet another error—namely, that of leaving Europe too much open to the attack of Russia, and Prussia too weak; whereas the latter ought to have been strengthened, and Russia driven in the direction of Asia. Lastly, the treaties of 1815 had inflicted bitter injury upon France, which had a right not only to the restoration of the frontiers of 1789, but to territorial aggrandisement beyond those frontiers.

The memoir presented to the Council in September

1829 by Polignac was based upon these fundamental ideas, which had received the sanction of Charles X.

In it, Polignac demands Belgium for France, as far as the Meuse, the mouth of the Scheldt, and the sea. The possession of Belgium was necessary for France in order to cover Paris against an invasion; since, in consequence of the centralisation in France as the result of the revolution, the fate of Paris determined the fate of the whole country.

In the first sitting of the Council, the Dauphin objected that England would never consent to let Antwerp fall into the hands of France; and proposed that, instead of Belgium, the Rhine provinces should be annexed.

Polignac replied, 'This only proves that we must have Antwerp. Either we consent for ever to be saddled with the treaties of 1815, or we must make up our minds to incur the hostility of England. In alliance with Russia, Prussia, Bavaria, and the greater part of the rest of Germany, we can force England.'

After the first sitting of the Council had been closed, without any result being arrived at, Polignac read, in the second sitting, a memoir on the relative value of Belgium as compared with the Rhine provinces, drawn up with a view to the refutation of the Dauphin. In this memoir he says that the Rhine

provinces were not so well situated geographically, and would be more difficult to defend and administer. Belgium, on the other hand, would strengthen the maritime power of France, which the Continent could well afford to see strengthened, since France would place herself at the head of an alliance for the freedom of the sea. The acquisition of the Rhine provinces would, on the contrary, involve the taking up of an aggressive attitude towards Germany. Lastly, were France to content herself with the Rhine provinces, this would be construed as the result of fear of England, and her credit would suffer in consequence. Thereupon, the Dauphin withdrew his counter proposition.

Russia, according to Polignac's great memoir, was to be driven in the direction of Asia. He handed over to her Moldavia and Wallachia, Armenia, and as much of Anatolia as she wished to take. She was to cut a passage for herself to India, and take up a maritime position in the Mediterranean against England.

Austria, according to Polignac's plan, should receive Bosnia and Servia, in order to strengthen her maritime position. The rest of European Turkey was to constitute a Christian kingdom, under the King of the Netherlands, by means of which an important

maritime Power would be created to counterbalance that of England. Egypt, Syria, Arabia, and the Barbary States were to be formed into a Mahometan kingdom under Mahomet Ali.

The north of Europe was likewise to be reorganised with a view to increasing its maritime strength, and for this purpose, Holland was to be united with Prussia. The union of Holland with Belgium, says the memoir, had only been invented by England in order to strangle Holland's maritime genius and cause her absorption by Belgium.

On the other hand, the nucleus of the Prussian monarchy is strengthened by the Kingdom of Saxony, and the King of Saxony is transported to Aix-la-Chapelle, as King of Austrasia, and obtains the Prussian territories between the Meuse and the Rhine.

Prussia, however, retains the northern part of the Rhine provinces, for the purpose of keeping up her communications with Holland ; the southern portions devolve upon Bavaria, in order to connect the two parts of that kingdom. In case a war should arise between France and Austria, and Bavaria take part with France, she was to obtain the Inn Viertel, the Hausrück, and Salzburg.

England's consent to the whole plan was to be bought by the cession of the Dutch Colonies.

The Council decided to send this project to the Duc de Mortemart at St. Petersburg. The instructions which accompanied it were as follows :

'The memoir is the expression of our wishes. We do not, however, insist upon every detail. The means for carrying out the plan we propose might be found in a congress. We should not, however, consent to such a course, unless Russia first guaranteed to us the acquisition of Belgium. The better way appears to us to be, a secret understanding between the two Cabinets, to which Prussia and Bavaria should be afterwards admitted. Austria would then be in our power, and England would be isolated. The accession of Prussia would be the condition *sine quâ non* of a definite arrangement with Russia. Should the peace between Russia and Turkey have been signed before the receipt of these instructions, the Ambassador is to lay them aside.'

As it turned out, the peace of Adrianople was signed on September 14, before the instructions were despatched to St. Petersburg, and the whole of this great project came to nought ; but it is a remarkable proof that certain ambitious views have existed in France at all times, and under all governments.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BELGIAN QUESTION, TO THE TREATY OF NOVEMBER 1831.

Outbreak of the Belgian Revolution, 1830—Letter of the Princess Lieven, and the impression produced by it in England—Why the Belgian Revolution did not lead to a European War—Opening of the London Conference—*Bases de séparation* of January 20 and 27, 1831—Rejected by Belgium, trying to follow its own way—Election of the Duc de Nemours—Belgium proposes a new plan—Ministry of Lebeau-Devaux — Its scheme — Election of Prince Leopold, and agreement with the Conference on modifications in the *bases de séparation*—Beginning of Leopold's candidature—Belgian deputation to London—The Prince makes his acceptance of the crown dependent on a previous understanding with the Conference, on the conditions essential to the establishment of Belgium, and perseveres in his position—He promises, however, eventually to accept the Belgian Constitution without limitation and reservation—Stockmar's influence in this decision—Election of Leopold in the Belgian National Congress—Negotiations of the Belgian Commissaries with the London Conference on modifications of the *bases de séparation* —Result—The Eighteen Articles of June 26 more favourable to Belgium—Leopold accepts the crown on condition that the Belgian Congress accepts the Eighteen Articles, which is done on July 9—Precarious position of Leopold, owing to the absence of definite guarantees on the part of the Great Powers—These promise first to recognise him as Belgian King, but when Holland rejects the Nine Articles the Northern Powers delay their recognition—In spite of this Leopold decides on going to Brussels—Before his departure he gives up, with certain reservations, his English Annuity—Stockmar's influence—Letter of the Prince to Lord Grey—Parliamentary debates—Leopold's entry into Brussels, July 21—Stockmar's activity—The raid of the Dutch—Entry of the French—Armistice—Behaviour

of the King during and after the catastrophe—Stockmar, as confidential agent of the King, goes to London (end of August)—Unfavourable effect of the defeat in August upon the further progress of the Belgian negotiations at the Conference—Conversations with Lords Palmerston and Grey, and with Baron Bülow—Talleyrand in favour of a partition of Belgium—England's impatience to see Belgium evacuated by the French—Stockmar admits that Belgium cannot hope to obtain the Eighteen Articles in their original form, and must consent to modifications—He recommends the marriage of Leopold with a daughter of Louis Philippe, as a preservative against French intrigues—France ready to evacuate Belgium—Conversation with King William IV.—Belgium's difficult position between France and the other Powers—Talleyrand's attitude—Thoughts of a second raid by the Dutch—Fall of Warsaw, and its unfavourable effect on the Belgian Question—Speculations of the French Legitimists on a general war—Lord William Russell's opinion of Leopold—The Conference, October 14, agrees upon the Twenty-four Articles—Stockmar advises their acceptance—His arguments against the King's abdication, and against his personal scruples with regard to the acceptance of the Twenty-four Articles—Stockmar goes to Brussels—Belgium accepts the Twenty-four Articles, which are incorporated in the Treaty of November 18, 1831, whereby the Five Powers recognise Belgium.

IT was a remarkable freak of fortune that, within a year of Prince Leopold's refusal of the Greek crown in May 1830, he should be sought for as King by another nation.

The Belgian Revolution became a *fait accompli* at the end of September 1830, after the failure of the attack made by Prince Frederick of the Netherlands upon Brussels.[1] A letter of Princess Lieven to Prince

[1] A passage out of a letter addressed to an old friend of Stockmar's, Sir Robert Adair, by Metternich, on the subject of the Belgian Revolution, will be read with interest :—

Leopold gives a lively description of the impression caused by the event in London. She writes:—

'Brighton: 1 octobre 1830.

'Ah, Monseigneur, que de mauvaises nouvelles depuis la dernière lettre que j'eus l'honneur d'écrire à V. A. R.! Je dînais avant-hier au Pavilion.[1] Le duc de Wellington y vint, très-calme, très-assuré que les affaires belges devaient être terminées, que Bruxelles devait s'être soumis. Après le dîner arriva un courrier de Londres, portant la nouvelle que l'armée du roi s'était retirée. Il en fut accablé, atterré, "*diablement mauvaise affaire.*" Les mêmes nouvelles portaient qu'un grand nombre de militaires français avait dirigé la défense de Bruxelles. Sans voir trop noir dans l'avenir, on peut se dire qu'une guerre générale sera

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'Le peuple belge est facile à conduire pour ceux qui savent comment il doit être conduit. Il tient de l'esprit de calcul des Hollandais, du mouvement français et du cagotisme espagnol. Si le roi Guillaume avait su gouverner la Belgique, il la posséderait aujourd'hui. Ce collége philosophique de Louvain et le refuge des carbonaris français ont été pour lui de mauvais éléments de puissance. L'empereur Joseph a aussi voulu faire de la philosophie, et elle lui a bien mal réussi. Il est inconcevable qu'après un exemple aussi frappant le roi Guillaume ne se soit pas pris pour averti. Mais ce roi est aussi de ces hommes qui n'oublient et n'apprennent rien, et avec ce défaut on perd des trônes.'

[1] The Brighton Pavilion, with the King.

la conséquence inévitable de cet état de choses ; et par quoi et quand finira-t-elle ? En vérité il y a de quoi confondre les meilleures têtes ; que vont devenir celles, qu'assez d'expérience nous a appris à regarder comme bien médiocres ?

'Le duc de Wellington me paraît très-engoué de M. de Talleyrand ; il dit de lui que c'est un très-honnête homme. La *probité* de M. de Talleyrand me rappelle *l'esprit* de M. de Polignac.'[1]

Favourable circumstances, however, combined to dispel the fears that the Belgian Revolution would disturb the peace of Europe.

We need only here enumerate the three principal causes of this pacific solution :—

1. The Liberal movement in England which, after paralysing the Wellington Ministry, brought the Whigs into power.

2. The Polish insurrection, which occupied the attention of Russia.

3. The peaceful inclinations of the King of Prussia.

It is certain that at the first news of the Revolution, Russia urged armed intervention, and offered, in accordance with the secret treaties of 1815,[2] to furnish

[1] Of whom Wellington in 1829 had thought so highly.

[2] In the Treaty of Chaumont of March 1, 1814 (Art. 7), Austria, Russia, England and Prussia had promised that, if any

60,000 men for that purpose. It endeavoured at the same time to induce England to co-operate with it, but the Tory Ministry refused this co-operation, the spirit of the times rendering it impossible for *any* Ministry to grant such a request.

After King William had, at the beginning of October, invoked the aid of the five great Powers, who, as signatories of the treaties of Vienna and Paris, had created the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the plenipotentiaries of these Powers met in conference in London. The first Protocol drawn up by the Conference on November 4, called upon Holland and Belgium to accept an armistice, which they accordingly did.

The Belgian National Congress met on November

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one of the four Powers were attacked by France, each of the others would come to its assistance with 60,000 men. The provisions of this Treaty were renewed by that of March 25, 1815, concluded at Vienna, after Napoleon's return from Elba (Klüber, 'Acts of the Congress of Vienna,' vol. i. part iv. p. 59). In the quadruple alliance concluded at the same time as the second Peace of Paris, Nov. 20, 1815 ('Martin's Nouv. Rec.,' vol. ii. p. 736), the resolutions arrived at in the Treaty of Chaumont were repeated, and in the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), the four Powers, in a secret conference, declared that they would maintain among themselves the engagements of November 20, 1815. See Gervinus, 'History of the 19th Century,' vol. ii. p. 279.

10, declared on the 18th the independence of Belgium, pronounced itself on the 22nd in favour of a monarchical form of government, and on the 23rd decreed the exclusion of the House of Orange Nassau. On December 20, the London Conference accepted in principle the independence of Belgium, and on January 20 and 27, 1831, laid down the so-called 'bases de séparation,' i.e., a draft of preliminaries to a convention which should effect a separation between Holland and Belgium, and bring about a detailed arrangement between the two countries. These preliminaries were accepted by Holland and rejected by Belgium, who considered the conditions respecting the territorial division and the repartition of the debt as prejudicial to its interests. The 'bases' preserved to Holland the old possessions of the Republic of the United Netherlands of the year 1790, and granted to Belgium the remaining provinces of the United Kingdom as formed in 1815; but deprived her entirely and without further appeal of Luxemburg, at the same time appointing to her $\frac{1}{3}\frac{6}{1}$ of the public debt of the hitherto United Kingdom.

The Belgians tried for a while to go their own way, and turn their backs on Europe, trusting to the support of France, which played a double game in

regard to the Conference.[1] The National Congress voted the Constitution, and on February 3, 1831, elected the Duke of Nemours as King of the Belgians. Louis Philippe, however, not daring to beard the other Powers, declined the crown on February 17 on behalf of his son. This first mischance was followed in the months of March and April by several other important events which were calculated to bring home to the wiser sort among the Belgians the double conviction—

1. That without coming to an understanding with the London Conference, Belgium could not get out of the difficulties in which she found herself.

2. That the continuation of this state of transition might become highly dangerous to Belgium. For delay in arriving at a definite state of things naturally tended to stimulate the action of the extreme parties, and by producing internal anarchy, to favour a plan which kept repeatedly coming to the surface, viz., that of putting an end to the Belgian perplexity by dividing the country between the great Powers.

To the Lebeau-Devaux Ministry[2] is due the merit

[1] For this double-dealing of France, see Bulwer's 'Life of Lord Palmerston,' vol. i. pp. 27–135.

[2] After Louis Philippe refused the crown for his son, the Belgian Congress elected Baron Surlet de Chokier as Regent,

of having clearly apprehended these dangers, and of having set themselves to save the country from them with energy and skill. Their plan was to bring the Revolution to a conclusion by electing Prince Leopold King, and by entering into fresh negotiations with the Conference, with a view to obtain favourable modifications of the bases of January 20 and 27.

Leopold's name had been already mentioned in November 1830, immediately after the first assembling of the National Congress, by individual Belgians, and more especially by Van de Weyer. But at that time the tendency in Belgium was still to lean on France, and the Prince's name failed to find a ready echo even in England. The Wellington Ministry, in whose black books Leopold had been inscribed ever since the Greek business, would not hear of the independence of Belgium, whilst the Grey Ministry, which succeeded it on November 16, having at first favoured the candidature of the Prince of Orange, reconciled itself but gradually to the idea, and only later became favourable to the candidature of Prince Leopold, which the Court looked upon with an evil eye. France, on the other hand, would only too

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whose second Ministry, the one named in the text, took office on March 28.

willingly have seen the Belgian throne occupied by the Duc de Nemours. When at the beginning of January 1831, M. Gendebien, a member of the Provisional Government, sounded Louis Philippe respecting the eventual election of Prince Leopold and his marriage with a Princess of the House of Orleans, the King expressed himself warmly in praises of the Prince, but held out no hopes of the realisation of these projects.[1] The Minister, Count Sebastiani, on the other hand, angrily observed to Gendebien :—'Si Saxe-Cobourg met un pied en Belgique, nous lui tirerons des coups de canon.'

When, however, the candidature of the Duc de Nemours had been finally abandoned, both England and France became more and more reconciled to the idea of seeing Leopold on the throne of Bel-

[1] Gendebien, in his 'Révélations historiques sur la Révolution de 1830,' relates the following :—'Je dis au roi que le second objet de ma mission était de demander son agrément pour l'élection du prince Léopold de Saxe-Cobourg et une alliance avec une princesse d'Orléans. Le roi me répondit : "Je connais depuis longtemps le prince Léopold ; c'est un beau cavalier, un parfait gentilhomme, très-instruit, très-bien élevé ; la reine le connaît aussi et apprécie les avantages de sa personne. Mais . . . . . il y a un mais, qui n'a rien de désobligeant pour la personne et les qualités du prince ; il y a des répugnances de famille, des préjugés peut-être, qui s'opposent à l'union projetée."'

gium ; and towards the middle of April gave it to be understood that they were not unfavourable to the Prince. On the side of France, the prospect was at the same time held out that the desired alliance might perhaps be entered into[1] about a year after the Prince had ascended the throne.

It was at this time that the Lebeau Ministry sent a deputation consisting of four members of the Congress to London, to enquire confidentially what would be the views of the Prince, in the event of the crown being offered to him by the Belgian Congress. The envoys arrived on April 20, and after a preliminary conference with Stockmar, were received on the 22nd by the Prince at Marlborough House.

Lebeau had wished and hoped to move the Prince to a simple and unconditional acceptance of the crown, in order by his help and influence to bring the negotiations about to be opened with the Conference to a satisfactory issue. The deputation, however, were able to convince themselves at once, and after their first interview with the Prince, that the latter was determined to make his acceptance of the crown depend upon an understanding being previously

[1] As early as February 24, France had expressed itself in this sense to England. Bulwer's 'Life of Palmerston,' vol. ii. p. 43, *note*.

arrived at with the Conference, respecting the vital conditions necessary to the constitution of Belgium, viz., the question of the territorial limits and that of the public debt. The experiences which the Prince had made in the Greek business led him on the present occasion to assume the only correct attitude, i.e., not to accept without further negotiations the crown offered to him, and trust to the future to obtain the vital conditions necessary to the existence of the State over which he was called upon to rule; but on the contrary, both in justice to himself and the Belgians, to make his acceptance conditional on the previous certainty that, what was offered to him should have acquired a form that could be accepted. 'In order to render my election possible, and to make it useful to the Belgians,' such was his answer to the deputation, 'it must be associated with a solution of the territorial and financial difficulties, so that Belgium and her King may be recognised by Europe. I cannot accept the sovereignty of a State, whose territory is a matter of controversy to all the Powers. That would be tantamount to placing myself, the moment I put my foot on Belgian ground, in a state of war with the whole world, without any advantage to you.'

All the efforts of the Belgian Commissioners to

induce him to accept at once and unconditionally, failed; in spite of Lebeau's energetic instructions from Brussels. 'Urge upon the Prince,' writes Lebeau to the deputies on April 24, 'that the country, whose patience is exhausted, is perfectly justified in insisting upon an immediate solution;' and again on April 28, 'the election must constitute the first, not the last, act of the negotiations;' and again on May 8, 'I cannot tell whether war will be able to avert the anarchy by which we are threatened, but certain it is that we can only avert revolution by a resumption of hostilities, or by the announcement that Prince Leopold has accepted the throne. We are going to convoke the Congress on the 15th, or at latest on the 18th. If, when it has assembled, we are unable to carry through the election of the Prince, the greatest dangers will stare us in the face. But the election is not to be thought of unless a positive assurance be given of its being accepted without reserve and unconditionally. I do not exaggerate, we are threatened with a fearful catastrophe. French partisans, Republicans, Orangists, are combining against us. An immediate election can alone dispel the threatening clouds.'

The Prince, however, would not swerve from his determination.

Upon another point, which was discussed in the very first negotiations with the Belgian Commissioners, Leopold showed his readiness to accede to the wishes of the Ministry. He promised to accept eventually, without condition or reserve, the constitution voted by the Congress. The influence exercised on this occasion upon the Prince by Stockmar has been faithfully and characteristically described, as we ourselves are able to testify, by the Munich Professor, Karl Friederich Neumann, from verbal communications of Stockmar. In the 'German Year Book for Politics and Literature,' vol. viii. p. 315, he writes:

'Once, at a friendly dinner at Munich, we were talking of the Government of Louis Philippe, of the unprincipled manner in which his Ministers falsified the Constitution, and of the probability that this would lead to a new revolution. This was several years before the February Revolution.[1] 'I have great confidence in the people,' observed Stockmar; 'they always learn to distinguish, if not at once, yet after a time, between those who mean to deal honestly with them, and those who merely desire to dazzle them with false appearances. For my part I stick to our old German proverb, "ehrlich währt am

[1] It was in the winter of 1844–5.

längsten" or as the English say, "honesty is the best policy." It was always in this sense that I gave my advice whenever King Leopold asked me for it. I will give you an instance, Mr. Professor, which may not be without interest to a man who is lecturing at the University on modern history.

'After carefully studying the Belgian Constitution, Leopold doubted whether with such laws it would be possible to govern a State and to maintain liberty and order; those two inseparable conditions of a progressive human society. "My dear Stockmar," said Leopold, "read the constitution and give me your opinion." I went through the new Belgian organic statute, continued the Baron, with the closest attention, comparing paragraph with paragraph, and undoubtedly found that it confined the power of the Government within very narrow limits. Here, however, my firm confidence in the people came to my assistance. "True, Sir, most true," such as nearly as possible were the words with which I addressed the clear-sighted Prince, "the power of the Crown and of the Ministers of the Crown is very closely limited by this constitution. But make the attempt and see whether these liberties may not be made compatible with order; try and govern in the spirit of this constitution, and do so with the most scrupulous conscientiousness. If

you find that good government is incompatible with this organic statute, send a message after a certain time to the Chambers, in which you frankly state the experiences you have made, and point out the faults of the constitution. You may rest assured, that if you have acted to the best of your ability and according to the dictates of your conscience, the people will stand by you, and will gladly undertake to make the changes of which the necessity may be demonstrated." King Leopold followed my advice, and, as you are aware, Mr. Professor, no evils of any importance resulted. On the contrary, Belgium, as you know, in many respects stands forth as a model amongst the States of Europe.'

But as the Prince could not yield to the wishes of the Belgian Ministry with respect to the acceptance of the crown, though he did so with regard to the constitution, they were compelled to propose his election, to a certain extent contingently; though with the positive assurance of his acceptance of the crown, if certain conditions were fulfilled; but these conditions, it must not be forgotten, presupposed that the negotiations with the Conference, which had not yet been commenced, should lead to a satisfactory result; or at all events to a result which the great Powers,

the Belgian Congress, and the Prince would consider as acceptable.

On June 4, after a violent parliamentary struggle, the Congress elected Leopold, and despatched a deputation to London to acquaint the Prince with the result. The Ministry at the same time sent two commissioners, MM. Devaux and Nothomb, across the Channel, to open negotiations with the Conference, on whose action every further step now depended. The deputation and the Commissioners lodged in London at the same hotel.

They stood to each other in a very peculiar position, not without a comical side to it; for owing to the attitude taken up by the Prince, he could give no answer to the communication which the deputation was charged to make to him, before the result of the negotiations with which the Commissioners were entrusted was known; and consequently he could not receive the deputation officially until the close of the negotiations. The latter therefore waited for this moment with natural impatience, from the 8th to the 26th of June; and used jealously to enquire of the Commissioners when they would be pleased to open the door to them.

During these weeks, however, the Commissioners were not idle. Assisted by the zealous co-operation

which the Prince in his private capacity tendered to them, they succeeded in obtaining from the Conference the important and advantageous modifications of the 'bases de séparation,' of January, which were contained in the so-called eighteen articles of the Protocol of June 27.

In respect to territory, the following advantages were offered to Belgium by the eighteen articles: 1st, they left the Luxemburg question an open one, and promised to maintain in Luxemburg the *status quo* favourable to Belgium during the separate negotiations which were to be carried on with regard to this territory, between Belgium on the one hand, and Holland, and the Germanic Confederation respectively, on the other. 2nd, Belgium received the necessary guarantees for the navigation of the Scheldt, for the use of the canal of Terneuse, and for the regulation of the course of the water in the Flemish provinces. Lastly, the eighteen articles admitted in principle the claim of Belgium to the *enclaves* of foreign territories, which according to the *status quo* of 1790 had, at that time, existed within the frontiers of the Dutch Republic; and thereby opened up to Belgium the possibility that these enclaves might be exchanged for the whole or at least a part of the Dutch province of Limburg. In regard to the repartition of the public debt, the eighteen articles

laid down the perfectly just principle, which was at the same time practically for the advantage of Belgium, that each country was to bear the debt which they were respectively burdened with at the time of their entering into partnership; whilst those that had been jointly contracted should be divided between the two in an equitable manner.

The eighteen articles were signed on June 26, and on the same day Prince Leopold received the deputation of the Congress, which communicated to him the vote by which the Congress had called him to the throne. He accepted the crown with the following words:

'I accept the offer you make to me, but upon the distinct understanding that it will be the business of the Congress to take the measures which will alone enable the new State to constitute itself, and thereby to secure its recognition by Europe.'

He expressed the same idea still more precisely in a letter addressed the same day to the Belgian Regent. 'As soon as the Congress shall have accepted the eighteen articles proposed to it by the London Conference, I shall consider all difficulties in regard to myself personally as removed, and shall immediately proceed to Belgium.'

On June 29 the answer of the Prince and the

eighteen articles were communicated to the Congress. The debates, which began on July 1, continued with much parliamentary violence till the 9th, and closed on that day with the acceptance of the eighteen articles. On the 11th, a second deputation from the Congress reached London, to notify to the King elect the acceptance of the eighteen articles, and to conduct him to Belgium.

The condition made by the Prince had consequently been fulfilled, and he was now bound by his word not to give up the Belgians. Whilst preparing for the journey, however, he could not hide from himself how precarious his position still was. The eighteen articles were merely a draft of preliminaries, proposed by the great Powers for a future treaty to be concluded between Belgium and Holland. They had been accepted by Belgium, but was it to be expected that they would be equally accepted by Holland? The Conference had charged the Austrian plenipotentiary, Baron Wessenberg, to take them to the Hague and to give the explanations that might be necessary to cause their acceptance there. But the language till then held by Holland left little hope that this mission would meet with success. What if Holland refused? What would Prince Leopold's position then be? The

Powers represented in Conference had, it was true, done everything since his election to urge him to accept the crown offered to him, but there was no official act of the Conference recording the fact; no formal promise that they would recognise him, still less, that they would protect him in the possession of his new dignity. Under these circumstances, it was a matter of paramount importance for the Prince to obtain from the plenipotentiaries at the Conference at least positive verbal assurances. For this purpose he received them on July 12, and put the point-blank question to them: 'Will all the Powers recognise me on the spot if, without waiting the answer of the King of Holland, I at once proceed to Brussels?' 'Oui, quand même,' answered the Russian plenipotentiary, Count Matuszewicz, 'because in this case we should find means to force the King of Holland to accept.' It was only after this declaration that the Prince received the deputation of the Congress, and fixed the day for his departure to Brussels. Two days before his departure the news arrived that the King of Holland had refused to accept the eighteen articles; upon which, the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian plenipotentiaries declared that their respective governments must for the present postpone their recognition of the Prince. On the other hand, England and

France declared that they would keep their promise. The Prince was thus placed in the awkward position of having to decide whether, after the refusal of Russia, Prussia, and Austria to recognise him for the present, he could, after all that had passed, withdraw from the engagement he had taken ; and whether he could look upon the support he might hope to obtain from England and France, as weighing heavier in the balance than the passive attitude, not far removed from hostility, observed by the other three Powers. He came to the conclusion that the engagements he had taken amounted to a solemn pledge, and therefore set forth to undertake his new duties full of courageous determination, but without hiding from himself the immense difficulties which lay in the way of his fulfilling them.

On the day the Prince left London, July 16, he came to a resolution involving great pecuniary sacrifices. He renounced his English annuity of 50,000*l.*, which had been formally granted to him in his marriage contract, and by Act of Parliament, and which was his for life, irrespective of the death of Princess Charlotte, and consequently without reference to his obtaining the Belgian or any other crown. The considerations which determined him to take this step were of a political kind. The King of Belgium, as an

English pensioner, could never have enjoyed proper respect and consideration, and would never have acquired such independence in the eyes either of his own country or of England, or of the other Powers: and thus the great political success which marked Leopold's career could never have accrued to him in that character. It was Stockmar who strenuously urged these considerations on the Prince, and who carried the point of the renunciation, after his usual plan of never hesitating to expect from the princes to whom he gave advice, a readiness to make great and at the time often painful and burdensome sacrifices, for higher objects; even when the attainment of these objects lay in the far future.

From the English point of view, moreover, this much was certain, that the death of Princess Charlotte and the accession of her husband to a throne, with the additional prospect of a second marriage, morally and materially withdrew the only grounds on which the continuance of Leopold's annuity could well be defended, i.e. that of expediency. There remained, however, another question, whether the *formal* right which the Prince undoubtedly had to his pension could be regarded as *de facto* secure. Stockmar's opinion, as proved by numerous passages in his writings, was to the effect, that the King of the

Belgians would not have been left in undisputed possession of his pension.

'They were only waiting,' he writes in a letter of February 14, 1832, 'for the King's departure for Brussels, to move resolutions in both Houses respecting the "inexpediency" of a continuance of the annuity. The motion in the House of Commons was already on the paper, and was only withdrawn after the Prince's letter to Lord Grey containing his renunciation had been read in the House. What would have been the probable results of these motions? I make a difference between the scandal which would have been inseparably bound up with them, and the actual results. I will not exaggerate the scandal, but it would at all events have been an unwelcome accompaniment to a new Regent on his first arrival in his country. As regards the actual result, the intention was first to discuss the impracticability of the continued payment of an annuity to a foreign sovereign, and then to move that a petition be addressed by Parliament to the recipient, begging him, on the score of the distressed state of the nation, to renounce his pension. It would have been impossible to refuse the petition of Parliament, and how different would have been the effect upon the Prince's personal position, of an extorted concession of this

kind, from that produced by his voluntary renunciation.'

It would be foolish at the present day, after a whole generation has passed by, to attempt to decide with certainty whether these motions would have been carried or not. A direct withdrawal of the annuity by Parliament, in a country which has so strong a respect for vested rights as England, was not to be expected. But the moral pressure which the above motions were meant to put on the Prince, was something very different; and as the feeling universally prevalent in England, even with the Whigs, was that the Prince ought not to desire to keep his annuity, it was not beyond the reach of possibility that these motions might have been carried. The political excitements which prevailed at the time, in connection with Parliamentary Reform; the democratic current of the day, with its passion for effecting retrenchment in the public expenditure; the necessity the Reform Ministry were under to humour this tendency, could not but strengthen this possibility.

Under these circumstances the Prince's resolution certainly lost the merit of having been taken solely on the grounds of a higher kind of political wisdom, and he retained before the world not much more than the merit of having at the right moment, wisely,

and with good grace, and of his own will, renounced that, which under any circumstances, he would sooner or later have had to give up.

'The decision of the Prince,' writes Stockmar in one of his memoranda, 'was hastened by his learning that the Tory peer, Lord Londonderry, was going to ask the Government, in the House of Lords, on the evening of July 15, what arrangements they had made with the Prince in regard to the continuance of the English appanage. The Prince went on the morning of the same day to Lord Grey, to declare to him that he had no intention, as King of the Belgians, of drawing any portion of his English income to that country. Lord Grey praised the Prince for having come to so proper a resolution, and begged him to repeat in writing what he had stated verbally, in order that he might use the authority of a written document, in his reply to the questions about to be asked him in Parliament. In the afternoon, Stockmar was called to the Prince, who communicated to him the substance of his conversation with Lord Grey, and instructed him to draw up the promised letter. In the evening, Lord Londonderry asked Lord Grey, whether it was the intention of the King's Government to allow the Prince to go on drawing his pension in Belgium? Lord Grey answered, 'that a

discussion on that point could not with propriety be raised, that the income was settled upon the illustrious individual alluded to, by Act of Parliament, and over that settlement they (the Government) had no power or control, and possessed no right to interfere with it.'

Late that same evening, Stockmar drew up a draft of the letter to Lord Grey. On the morning of the 16th he read it to the Prince, who made a few alterations in it, copied it out, and sent it to Lord Grey, dated the previous day, July 15. The letter is as follows:

'July 15, 1831.

'My dear Lord Grey,—Before I quit the country, I am desirous to state in writing the intentions and views, which I had the pleasure of communicating verbally to you this morning, on the subject of my British annuity. As Sovereign of Belgium, it is not my intention to draw from this country any portion of the income which was settled upon me by Act of Parliament at the period of my marriage. Your Lordship is, however, well aware that up to the very moment of my leaving England I have maintained my establishments here upon their accustomed footing, and that consequently there remain to be fulfilled and discharged pecuniary engagements and outstanding debts to an amount which it is quite impossible

for me to state at the present time with precision; as soon, therefore, as I shall have accomplished the payment of all these demands, it is my intention to make over into the hands of trustees, whom I will without loss of time appoint, the whole of the annuity which I receive from this country in trust for the following purposes: I shall require my trustees to maintain in a state of complete "habitation" and of repair the house, gardens, and the park at Claremont, and further to pay all the salaries, pensions, and allowances which I shall deem a proper reward to those persons who have claims upon me for their faithful services during my residence in this country. I shall in addition require them to continue all those charities and annual donations to charitable institutions which have been allowed or subscribed to either by Princess Charlotte or myself up to the present period. All these objects having been fulfilled, it is my wish and desire that the remainder shall be repaid into the British Exchequer.

'I am, &c.

(Signed) 'LEOPOLD.'

With the Prince's letter in his hand, Lord Grey, on July 18, reminded the House of Lords, of the question put to him by the Marquis of Londonderry on the

15th, and his reply thereto. In his opinion, no one would have had a right to give the Prince even a hint on this subject; nevertheless, as regarded himself, he had never had a doubt as to the resolution which His Royal Highness would of his own free will come to in the matter. Now His Royal Highness had not only communicated to him this resolution verbally, but had afterwards sent it to him in writing, and the verbal communication had been made before the noble Marquis had put his question. The letter of the Prince was, it was true, a private one, but as so much had already been said on the subject, and as so strong a feeling had been expressed upon it elsewhere, he had determined to bring the letter to the knowledge of the public, if only to put a stop to invidious and unjust reflections which might arise from ignorance of the Prince's intentions. After reading the letter, Lord Grey concluded by saying[1] that this was the voluntary and gratuitous act of the illustrious Prince, and he was confident that a generous public would not blame the just and liberal

[1] The flattering and apologetic phrases with which a man like Lord Grey found it necessary to conciliate public opinion, are very characteristic of the then prevailing temper, of the attitude of the Ministry thereto, and of the precarious nature of Leopold's English annuity.

restrictions which limited the surrender of the complete amount of the annuity.

The Duke of Wellington then observed 'that the Prince held his annuity by as good a title as their lordships held their estates, namely, by the law of the land, and if the Prince chose to give up the pension, it must be made liable to those charges enumerated in the letter of His Royal Highness. He congratulated the House and the country on the course which His Royal Highness had adopted. His congratulations arose from the fact that this conduct would show to the people whom the Prince was about to govern, that their sovereign was above even the suspicion of dependence on a foreign country.'

Lord Althorpe read out the letter on the same day in the House of Commons, and said that the annuity was unquestionably the property of His Royal Highness, to dispose of as he thought proper. The House would do justice to the liberality of His Royal Highness. Mr. Robinson, who had given notice of a question on the subject, withdrew it, and said, 'That the Prince's liberality would be received with respect and admiration.' Sir Robert Peel 'considered the renunciation of a pension to which His Royal Highness had as clear and undoubted a right as any member of the House had to his private estate,

an act of extreme liberality. Compulsory resignation could not have been thought of—voluntary renunciation on the Prince's part was an act of wisdom.'

On all sides fine words and just. The Radicals and Tories, however, were probably in their hearts not a little vexed at losing so excellent an opportunity of attacking the Prince, upon a point on which it would have been so easy to appeal to the popular feeling.

Leopold made his entrance into Brussels on July 21. Stockmar accompanied him. Taking part as usual in political affairs as confidential adviser, his official occupation was to organise the household and establishment of the new King. Everything had in this department to be created anew, just as in politics, the very foundations of constitutional monarchy had to be laid. Consequently, in small things as well as in great, it was often necessary to go back to first principles. We will give a few characteristic passages from Stockmar's letters to the King, whilst the latter was travelling about in the provinces.

On July 28 he writes:

'Your Majesty will allow me to remind you that the erection of a Lutheran chapel for the regular divine service of your Majesty is indispensable. People say: "We don't ask whether he is a Lutheran,

but we do ask whether he goes to his own church in his own way."'

On August 1 he touches upon the system to be adopted by the King in answering addresses:

'The system of giving an answer on the spur of the moment, to addresses drawn up in writing, has many disadvantages. Such answers cannot, for one thing, be collated with those previously given under similar circumstances, and consequently run the risk of becoming monotonous; moreover, it may easily happen that some point may be forgotten, or overlooked, or insufficiently handled. Your Majesty ought always when travelling to be accompanied by some person specially charged with the duty of drawing up written answers to addresses, and who should be well fitted for the work.'

But the work of building up the new kingdom was after a very few days broken in upon by a violent crisis, which threatened the very existence of the Belgian State.

On August 1 the Dutch commandant of Antwerp, General Chassé, announced that he would recommence hostilities on the 4th. Fifty thousand Dutch troops approached the frontier. Could Leopold, with an army disorganised by the revolution, without experience or discipline, and numerically weaker, hope to

hold his own against this force? He naturally wished to do so, but he had no illusions on the subject.

The King chanced at that moment to be at Liège, and separated from his Ministry, which had remained at Brussels. He therefore called in the aid of the former Minister, Lebeau,[1] and took it on himself at once, in virtue of the guarantee of the neutrality and independence of Belgium contained in the eighteen articles, to invoke at Paris and London the armed intervention of France and England. In the meantime the Ministry at Brussels had, from constitutional scruples (paragraph 121 of the Constitution requires that before foreign troops can enter the country, a special law authorising them to do so should be passed), contented themselves with notifying the fact of Holland's aggression to the French and English Cabinets. Leopold, who afterwards, during the course of a long reign, proved himself the model of what a constitutional sovereign should be, was thus placed at the very outset of his career in the difficult position of having, in order to save the State, to disregard the letter of a Constitution, the strict observance of which was, on account of its very youth, the more jealously watched by the people. That he

[1] See 'J. Lebeau,' by M. Juste, p. 55, *et seq.*

acted rightly no one now will venture to dispute. The foreign intervention prevented the Dutch from making themselves masters of Brussels, and thereby striking a deadly blow at the independence of Belgium.

The King's cry for help was received on the 4th in London and Paris. Louis Philippe at once promised his assistance. The English Ministry contented themselves with ordering up Admiral Codrington's fleet from Plymouth to Dover, and remained deaf to the entreaty of Belgium that it should enter the Scheldt. On the 10th Marechal Gérard entered Belgium. It was high time; for the news arrived on the same day that the Belgian army of the Meuse, under General Daine, had retired in disorder, without firing a shot. On the 12th Leopold, who was with the small army of the Scheldt, had to fall back upon Louvain. He was surrounded by the Dutch, and must have surrendered with his troops, had not the Dutch, on the news of the advance of the French, been prevailed upon by the British Ambassador, Sir Robert Adair, to agree to a suspension of arms. On the 13th they began their retreat. On the 23rd the London Conference proffered to Holland and Belgium an armistice, to last till October 10, and this was agreed to by both parties.

After the events of the 12th, Stockmar was a long time in finding his King, whom he at last discovered in a village, where Leopold was surrounded by a scanty number of troops. Stockmar found him in a peasant's hut, lying on a bundle of straw, but perfectly cheerful, and whistling a tune. All reports coincide in representing him as having evinced the greatest courage and sangfroid, as long as it was possible for him to hold his army together, and here the Marquis Peu-à-peu showed that he could meet defeat and misfortune with composure and cheerfulness.

Belgium had been surprised, and the question naturally arises whether she ought to have allowed herself to be taken by surprise, and whether the Dutch invasion ought not to have been foreseen. It is not to be denied that Holland had, previously to the recommencement of hostilities, made several declarations which pointed in that direction. King William had on July 21 protested to the Conference against the eighteen articles, and had declared that if Prince Leopold accepted the throne, he could only regard him in the light of an enemy. On August 1 the Dutch Government had, it was true, expressed their readiness to enter into fresh negotiations, but had added that the King was determined to give

weight to those negotiations by military measures. Lastly, it would be difficult to believe that it lay out of the power of the Belgians to obtain information, respecting the armaments and the movements of troops, which enabled the Dutch Government to place 50,000 men on the frontier.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that if Belgium was unprepared when Leopold made his entry into Brussels on July 21, the new King could not by any conceivable means have made up for lost time by August 4.

For Stockmar it was a subject of peculiar interest to find out, to what extent the Powers represented in Conference, or any of them separately, had obtained beforehand positive information respecting the intentions of Holland. As early as August 1 he asks in a letter to the King, 'How comes Palmerston to state in the House of Commons, that he does not know whether, after all, war will not break out between Holland and Belgium?' On August 6 he writes: 'My belief is, that it is Russia which has drawn this war upon us, in the way of a diversion, and that Madame Lieven has had a great hand in it. Prussia will doubtless have connived.'

At the end of August he had the opportunity afforded him of pursuing his enquiries on this subject

in England, having been sent thither by the King to watch the suspicious turn which Belgian affairs had taken, in consequence of the proved inability of the new State to maintain unaided its independence against Holland. He remained in England as confidential agent of the King till the commencement of the year 1833. His intimate acquaintance with English affairs, the circumstance that for many years he had been on terms of personal intercourse with most of the influential statesmen of that country, and that he was accredited to them as the King's personal representative, made it in many ways easy for him to ascertain the real truth, and to influence the persons in whose hands the ultimate decision lay. Moreover, Stockmar was on the very best terms with the official representative of Belgium, the able, talented, spirited, thoroughly trustworthy, and courageous Van de Weyer. They continually discussed every point together, and acted in the most perfect accord.[1]

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[1] When Stockmar left England, early in 1833, Van de Weyer wrote to King Leopold : 'Vous avez eu la bonté, Sire, de remarquer combien je dois regretter l'absence de M. le baron Stockmar ; son départ laisse, en effet, un grand vide. Il a eu pour moi toute l'affection et la sollicitude d'un père, comme j'ai pour lui toute l'attachement d'un fils. Je n'oublierai jamais les sages conseils que je dois à son amitié.—*Juste : V. de Weyer* vol. i. p. 252.

On the very day of Stockmar's arrival in London, he had an interview with the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. He reports thereon on August 31, in connection with the subject alluded to above as follows:

'I at once attacked Palmerston very openly, telling him that our confidence in the protection and assistance of England was considerably shaken. I said that at the moment the Dutch made their sudden inroad into Belgium, we could hardly persuade ourselves that their intention of doing so had not been previously known in London, and as England had taken no direct part in driving them out, we were strengthened in our belief, that she meant henceforward to favour Holland at the expense of Belgium. Palmerston defended himself against the charge of having known of the intention of the Dutch, in a way which convinced me, that either he was really ignorant, and had been hoodwinked, or that he had not believed the information he may have received, respecting the impending rupture of the armistice.'

From the first of his interviews with the English Ministers, Stockmar became fully aware of the unfavourable change which the position of Belgium had undergone, in consequence of the unfortunate campaign of August 4–13.

Let us briefly recall what had previously taken place.

Holland had rejected the eighteen articles. Belgium had accepted them. The Conference had not by any means pledged itself to enforce those stipulations by arms. It is true that the Powers had encouraged Leopold to accept the throne, in reliance on those eighteen articles. But hardly was he installed at Brussels before the Conference, in consequence of Holland's refusal to accept the preliminaries of June 26, issued invitations to the contending parties to enter into 'fresh negotiations.' This mischance of the month of August rendered it impossible for Belgium to refuse to enter into these negotiations, and formally to take her stand on the eighteen articles. It was equally plain that she could not any longer hope to retain materially all the advantages which the June preliminaries promised to her, more especially the favourable provisions in respect to Limburg and Luxemburg.

And now let us allow Stockmar's letters to tell the story.

He thus continues his report, of August 31 :—

'Palmerston then adverted to the general aspect of the question. I retained a firm hold of the following points, because they appeared to me to reveal the

light in which the Conference viewed the late events between the Dutch and the Belgians, and also showed the direction in which it will probably endeavour to settle the dispute. "The Belgians," he said, "have unmistakably shown that they are unable by themselves to resist the Dutch. But for French assistance, they would have been utterly overthrown. Hence, if peace and quiet are to be restored, both the Belgians and the Dutch must give up part of their pretensions. Neither can the Belgians obtain the eighteen articles in their entirety, nor the Dutch the old Protocol of January, to which they originally adhered. If the Belgians refuse all concession, the Conference has nothing better to do than to withdraw altogether, and say, "Well and good, gentlemen, we will allow the Dutch to fight their quarrel out with the Belgians alone."'

'I did not reply to this last threat of Palmerston's by a single word, but I said to myself, that even if four of the Powers represented in Conference were in a position to wish and to act in this manner, it would still be impossible for France to allow the conquest of Belgium by Holland.

'In reply to my enquiry as to how the Conference, under these altered circumstances, proposed to regulate the territorial question between Belgium and Holland, he answered, "On this point we are not yet

altogether agreed," but he hinted at a partition of Limburg and the cession to Holland of the right bank of the Meuse.

'Palmerston laid especial stress on the following points: 1. The immediate and entire evacuation of Belgium by French troops. 2. The impossibility of allowing a separate treaty between France and Belgium respecting the Belgian fortresses,[1] and 3. The impossibility of peace being maintained if Belgium showed herself too French.'

The jealousy which the French intervention had excited in England, appeared still more strongly in a conversation which Stockmar had on the following day with the Premier, Lord Grey.

'I began,' he writes, 'by asking whether, since the Dutch inroad, the general policy of England in regard to Belgium had experienced a change, and I concluded by saying that in the event that it had, we had at least a right to ask to be informed what from henceforth was to be England's policy towards Belgium. He replied that England's policy had not changed, and that her exertions would continue to be directed towards the maintenance of Belgium's neutrality and independence. He then laid special stress on the

[1] We shall have to consider the question of the Belgian fortresses in a separate section.

following three points: 1. That of late the feeling that Holland was one of England's oldest and most necessary allies had revived and acquired strength, and consequently that no English Government could undertake to do anything which should materially weaken this ally. 2. That the complete evacuation of Belgium by French troops was the only means to maintain harmony between England and France. 3. That England would never allow France to conclude a separate treaty with Belgium on a subject which in no way concerned her (viz. the Belgium fortresses). I could perceive from the whole of the conversation, that Grey believes we have thrown ourselves into the arms of our neighbour *more than was necessary*, an opinion which may do us a great deal of harm here. The circumstance that our troops are organised and commanded solely by French officers was anything but pleasant to him. He was of opinion that this alone was sufficient to stamp us with the character of a French province.'

The report of September 2 is of great interest as denoting the general aspect of the Belgian business at this period.

'I have just returned,' it says, 'from Bülow (the Prussian Minister); the following is the substance of his statements:

'1. Talleyrand spoke to him night and day of a partition of Belgium,[1] and endeavoured to persuade him that if France, Prussia, and Holland would only come to an agreement upon the subject, the consent of England could be obtained by declaring Ostend and Antwerp free ports. He (Bülow) had hitherto always answered that Prussia could not encourage such a scheme, because she considered the combination of an independent and neutral Belgium as the sounder policy (in fact, Lord Grey told me that Bülow had shown him the despatch which he had written on the subject to Berlin, and that it was so decided against the partition, that he himself could not have written more to the purpose).'

'2. Bülow advised that the treaty of peace between Holland and Belgium should be concluded as quickly as possible, because until this was done, a general war was probable, and the door remained open to all kinds of combinations. So far Bülow.'

'As regards the state of public opinion in England, I am inclined to believe that, occupied as the English are with their internal affairs, they will not take the fate of the Dutch so very much to heart. On the other hand, the Opposition rides off on this question, and is by no means to be despised. Moreover,

[1] Comp. Bulwer, 'Life of Lord Palmerston,' vol. ii. pp. 102, 114, 123.

everything which Wellington says on the military side of the question, has very great weight; not only in the country generally, but also with Lord Grey, to which must be added, that, singularly enough, Talleyrand flatters Wellington in every possible way; and has obtained, it is said, considerable influence over him. It is also beyond a doubt that Falk[1] has influenced or bought the 'Times,' and it is equally certain that the Tories take Falk and the King of Holland under their protection in every way, and furnish them with news of every kind.'

'I will now take the liberty of expressing my own general views upon the present aspect of affairs, and will mention the most important practical consequences which I deduce from them.'

'1. The point of most importance appears to me to be the immediate and complete evacuation of Belgium on the part of the French; without this, the continuance of the Grey Ministry is not certain; peace highly improbable; and the establishment of Belgium as a State, impossible. The Dutch, at the present moment, desire nothing more ardently than that the French should remain, because they hope to bring about thereby, first, the fall of the Grey Ministry; secondly, a general war; thirdly, the partition of

[1] The Dutch Plenipotentiary.

Belgium. Under no circumstances must we think of using the French as a means of intimidating the Conference. Such a course would be of no use, would only create a bitter feeling against the King personally, and would force the four Powers to lean all the more towards Holland.'

'2. The Treaty of Peace between Holland and Belgium cannot be too soon concluded. This will only be possible if the Belgians understand how to sacrifice the unimportant to the important. The eighteen articles are the basis of our rights. We risk losing a great deal, or perhaps everything, should we now venture to demand more. Even as regards what is contained in the eighteen articles, we ought to hold fast only to that which is absolutely necessary for the independent existence of Belgium.'

'3. It is my firm opinion that we have but one remedy to oppose to the French intrigues, which at the present moment are rife against us, here, and in Belgium, and in France. This is the immediate promise of Louis Philippe to give his consent to the marriage. By this means alone can we disarm intrigues which will otherwise in a short time overthrow us. Nor will Holland leave off urging France to a partition, until this marriage is declared. Believe me, at the present moment it is more important than

anything else, and must be brought about as quickly as possible. There is not a moment to be lost.'

Precarious as at this time was the state of the Belgian business, Stockmar never lost courage, or the power of looking on clearly beyond his daily vexations and troubles. To keep always before his eyes the great and important points, and with reference to them to stimulate and strengthen the morale of the princes by whose side he stood, this was always his forte.

In this sense he writes to the King on September 10:

'For the present I only urge upon your Majesty the following—

'1. Never to lose courage.

'2. Never to slacken your efforts, *a point on which your enemies reckon.*

'3. Not to lose sight of the reconstruction of the civil service while engaged in the organisation of the army. The nation must see that in the midst of the storm, the works of peace are not forgotten. That hopes of peace should be kept alive, even if these hopes should not be afterwards fulfilled, is of the greatest importance.'

In the meantime, Stockmar was able, within a very few days, to send comforting intelligence to Brussels.

On September 12, he writes:

'Baudrand[1] told me the night before last, that the French Government were resolved to evacuate the whole of Belgium, feeling themselves at the present moment strong enough to do so. I told this to Palmerston yesterday, who was not yet aware of it, and who was exceedingly pleased.'

'That Austria does not desire the partition of Belgium, I consider as certain.'

Moreover, the conversations which Stockmar had on September 11, with Palmerston and William IV. were of a reassuring kind.

'I spoke to Palmerston,' he reports, 'on the coolness with which English Ministers were said to have expressed themselves in regard to Belgium; my authorities being two Chargés d'Affaires, who had wished to intimidate me by what they said; and I especially adverted to a phrase, which it was reported had inadvertently slipped from them, namely, that it was quite indifferent to them whether we were able to hold our ground or not. He spoke very reasonably in answer to these observations, and gave me assurances which, as they are consonant with the interests of England, I hold to be sincere. He concluded with these words: "Only tell me what we can do to

[1] General Baudrand, 1st Adjutant to the Duke of Orleans.

prove our friendship for the King, and it shall be done."

'I thereupon adverted to the necessity we were under of employing French officers in the Belgian army. He said that as far as he was concerned, he had no objection to make. Yet there was no denying that it caused great jealousy, and that "the Uncle" (King William IV.) especially was very much against it. Thereupon I asked whether, as an antidote, it might not be possible to employ a few English officers. He thought that the idea in itself was not a bad one, but that possibly it might cause difficulties in Belgium itself. Before I left, he told me that he had yesterday received despatches from St. Petersburg, according to which the Emperor had expressed great astonishment at the attack made by the Dutch, and had called it a "mad attempt." With respect to the entrance of the French, the Emperor had said, "We must wait to see what they will do; we need not interfere with them, if they do no more than turn the Dutch out, but we must drive them out the moment they attempt to do more."

'Two hours later I had an audience of the King. I knew that he had a lecture ready for me, and consequently, upon entering the room, put on a most grave face, which disturbed his good-nature considerably,

and even embarrassed him not a little. He was a long time looking for his text, but at last he found it. It was this: that as a neutral Power we, in fact, did not require any army at all, and that our policy should be just as neutral as ourselves, and neither French nor English. He laid especial stress on the phrase, "I would myself discourage Leopold from leaning towards the English side if he were inclined to do so." He said on this subject much that was excellent, and which I could not but highly praise, and this at once restored his good-humour. He repeated several times that his *whole heart* was set on the maintenance of peace, and that for this a great deal depended on this Belgian affair. The appointment of French officers, he observed, was peculiarly disagreeable to him. I replied to this by what I had already said to Palmerston respecting English officers. He said eagerly, "This is a subject on which I must talk with you on another occasion: under no circumstances do I wish you to go, without once more coming to me. Tell the King many things from me, and how warmly I desire his happiness and success." '

Belgium had a difficult position amidst the five Powers. Active assistance, as we have seen, was to be expected from France only: and yet it was impossible wholly to trust France, as she only too often gave proof of dangerous wishes and *arrière-pensées*. Every

active assistance rendered by France threatened to arouse the jealousy and distrust of the other Powers; and first and foremost of the absolute Powers; who, partly on principle, partly on account of family connexions, were ill-disposed towards Belgium; and, in the second place, those of England, from whom under these circumstances, nothing was to be expected but a lukewarm and somewhat passive sympathy.

London, where the Conference was held, was, at the period which immediately followed the entrance of the French, peculiarly calculated to disturb the independence of opinion, for all minds there were under the fear of the overwhelming influence of the *arrière-pensées* of France in the Belgian business. Stockmar, nevertheless, although he had no sympathy whatever for France, did not allow himself to be led astray by the cry 'You Belgians are too French: you have altogether thrown yourselves into the arms of France.' He saw on the one side that it was desirable to remove the stumbling-block which the continued occupation of Belgium by French troops occasioned to the other Powers; but on the other hand, he fully recognised the fact, that France afforded the only effective support to the Belgian cause. He writes in this sense on September 15, 1831, alluding to a letter in which Leopold had shortly before urged upon Louis Philippe the evacuation of Belgium:

'The King's letter is good, reasonable, honourable, politically correct, in a word, just such a letter as a prince ought to write, and he that wrote it is worthy to be a king. It is in this sense that I have not ceased to preach the complete evacuation of Belgium by the French. Their presence had placed the English Government in a false position, and as long as this position continued, it was impossible to know whether the English *wished* to be hostile, or whether they were *forced* to be hostile. Now, we shall soon know what we have really got to expect from them.'

'I do not share the fear which is expressed to me in a number of letters, that as soon as the French have evacuated Belgium, the Conference, in the event of a second Dutch invasion,[1] would prevent the French from again assisting Belgium, because France is at present so situated that, whatever the Conference might say, she would be forced to come to the rescue just as rapidly as she did the first time. Consequently, the Belgian policy for the present must be to lean on France, *the circumstances of the case imperatively demand it.* If the Dutch attack, the Belgians must defend themselves as well as they can, and in spite of all the conferences in the world, they must not

[1] As we have seen, a simple armistice only had been concluded, which was to last but till October 10.

hesitate for a moment to call in the French a second time to come to their help, and that as quickly as possible. Hence the greatest watchfulness is required on the part of the Belgian Government, and there is need of a good system of spies, by which the military movements of the Dutch may at once be notified, and these movements made known at Paris. But though I am firmly persuaded that in case there is a second inroad by the Dutch, the French will a second time come to the rescue, yet in the interest of Belgium a second such inroad and a second such deliverance are in every way to be deprecated. For a second such deliverance would, I fear, lead to altogether different results from the first. Prussia would, in all probability, become mixed up in the affair, and a general war would become unavoidable.'

'For the negotiation of the treaty of peace with Holland, I lay down two principles which I am of opinion should never once be lost sight of, viz.:

'1. Act throughout as if France were really *de bonne foi* towards Belgium.

'2. Be assured that all the succour and assistance which Belgium can hope for in the Conference, can come from France, and France only. Endeavour, therefore, to obtain this help by every means in your power, and especially by means of private correspon-

dence with your "brother" (Louis Philippe) in Paris. Do not in this matter slacken, or give yourself one moment's rest. I may err, but as I see things here, it is my firm conviction that England can do little for us *positively*, but that she can only assist us *negatively*, viz., by *yielding* in regard to such demands in our favour as France insists upon. That these demands will be made by France, and will be insisted upon with firmness, is not to be expected from Talleyrand. It is of no use to enquire why he is not peculiarly favourable to Belgium, and what he is driving at. It is enough to know that he is so, and that we must endeavour, in spite of him, to carry our business through. Therefore keep bombarding Paris daily and hourly. Do everything in your power to cause him to receive more stringent instructions to represent our interests; and that he be ordered not to give way in the Conference, as far as we are concerned, without specially consulting his Government.'

In a letter of September 23, Stockmar again adverts to the eventuality of a second attack by Holland:

'I fully share,' he writes, 'the opinion that England alone ought to prevent a second attack on the part of the Dutch, and thereby prevent a general war. But I ask myself whether, even if she wished it, she has the

means to do it? What means has she got? Threats? Powers like England ought never to threaten unless previously resolved to give effect to their threats. Strong language, even if used, will do little good with the Dutch. They know too well that the English Government would be unable to fulfil their threats. As long as Holland, or rather, the house of Nassau, believes that they can gain only by war, the continuance of peace must be looked upon as highly problematical. If you talk to the English Ministers of a second attack on the part of Holland, they smile as if the thing were impossible: but they add that if, by October 10, no progress is made in the negotiations, they certainly will not be in a position to prevent the recommencement of hostilities. This, if I mistake not, is intended to act as an inducement to the Belgians to show themselves more pliable. The English complain that Belgium is very slack in the negotiations, and that she shows a bad disposition, and *mauvaise foi*.'

In a postscript he adds that Palmerston had just told him that the Dutch as well as the Belgian drafts for the treaty of peace had been sent in to the Conference; that both were extravagant, and that the Belgian draft went far beyond the original eighteen articles.

Stockmar remarks thereon:

'I am inclined to believe that what I wrote to Brussels four weeks ago, within twenty-four hours of my arrival here, will take place. The Conference will say that the demands of both parties being as far asunder as the poles, and drawn up under the dictation of violent passion, no hope of an understanding being arrived at between the parties can be entertained. Therefore we, the Conference, will, in the interest of Europe, which can no longer be the spectator of such a scandal, take the settlement of the conflict into our own hands.'

The prospects of Belgium had in the meantime become more gloomy, in so far as Russia, the least friendly of the great Powers, had by the fall of Warsaw and the gradual extinction of the Polish insurrection, recovered full liberty of action. Even Leopold at times was beginning to feel discouraged. In reply to a letter indicative of such a mood, Stockmar writes on September 26:

'The most important thing at present is to keep up our courage. Matters will not turn out as badly as we fear, nor as well as we wish. My firm conviction is that neither England, Prussia, nor Russia desires war, and that the Dutch will *not* attack us on the 10th of next month. The Powers will prevent her, not for the sake of Belgium, but because they do

not wish for war. Immediately after the fall of Warsaw, Zuylen (the Dutch Minister at the Conference) called on Bülow, and expressed the hope that now Prussia would hold very different language in favour of Holland. Bülow answered that Prussia would support Holland now, as formerly, in all her just demands, but that she would do no more now than before, because what his august master wished for was justice and peace; consequently, that the King of Holland must make up his mind that, the moment the Luxemburg question was settled with the German Confederation, Prussia would recognise the King of the Belgians.'

The same letter contains a fact which is not uninteresting, as showing how the elder Bourbons were speculating on the complications which had arisen out of the Belgian question:

'Damas,[1] who used frequently to visit Bülow, is in despair because the chances of a general war are disappearing. At the time that the evacuation of Belgium by the French was uncertain, and that the Carlists hoped there would in consequence be a general outbreak of hostilities, he had induced (by what means I know not) several houses in the city of their own

[1] Baron Damas, tutor of the Duc de Bordeaux, and belonging to the Court of Charles X.

accord to offer Bülow, and the Russian Minister, Lieven, to find the money their Governments might require "in case of war."'

The prophecies of Stockmar were fulfilled. October 10 passed by without hostilities recommencing, and October 14 brought the verdict of the Conference establishing, through the twenty-four articles, the existence of Belgium, under conditions which, as experience has shown, were not unfavourable to her.

As early as September 29, Stockmar writes:

'I have just met Palmerston. He told me in the course of conversation that he had informed van Zuylen, not as a member of the Conference, but in his character of British Minister, that England as England would not allow the reopening of hostilities after October 10.'

On October 10 he writes:

'I have just returned from Lord William Russell, who has arrived here from Brussels.[1] He has in the course of a very short conversation refreshed and pleased me not a little. His words have all the greater weight with me, because he is a man of few words in general. He said to me,[2] "I admire the King. I never gave him credit for what there is really in

[1] He had been to Brussels on a diplomatic mission.

[2] The words are given in English in the original.—*Translator.*

him. It seems it wants only external causes to rouse his faculties into action. The whole Government rests upon him, he does everything, and it is wonderful how much he does. It is astonishing how popular he is with everybody, and I believe he can do at this moment with the Chambers and the whole nation just what he pleases." He added one more remark which for this place [1] is of the greatest importance, viz.: "My conviction is that Leopold is not at all French." I said to him, "Lord William, you can do immense good by repeating the few words you have now said to me, to the Ministers, as well as to your friends. Everybody knows that you never say what you do not believe." '

This is not the place to enter into a detailed account of the twenty-four articles of October 14. It will be sufficient to recall the principal stipulations.

1. That Limburg on the right bank of the Meuse should be annexed to Holland, and the Walloon portion of Luxemburg to Belgium.

2. That towards the debt of the former united kingdom of the Netherlands, Belgium was to pay a yearly contribution of 8,400,000 florins.

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[1] London.

3. That Belgium was to be guaranteed free transit through Limburg, and the freedom of navigation on the Scheldt, and on the waters between the Scheldt and Rhine.

Lastly, the Conference declared to both parties simultaneously, that the five Powers guaranteed the execution of these articles as containing their irrevocable decisions, and that they were determined to obtain, by force, if necessary, the complete acquiescence of both parties.

Stockmar writes on October 14:

'As I am without the knowledge of various details, which would be necessary to judge whether or not the project of treaty coming from the Conference, really injures the material interests of Belgium, I have sought to form a judgment indirectly. I have found out what the Dutch think of the project. Falk (the Dutch plenipotentiary), who has always shown himself sober, reasonable, and clear-sighted, says:

'"The interests of Holland are so much jeopardised by the stipulations respecting the free navigation of the rivers, and the obligation in virtue of which Belgium would be allowed to continue to the German frontier, and through the Dutch territory, a railway, which it might construct from Antwerp to the

Dutch frontier near Sittard,[1] that I do not believe the King of Holland will ratify the Treaty."

'If this is so, it appears to me inversely that *our* interests cannot be much harmed, and that, therefore, taking all in all, it may be desirable on the part of Belgium to accept the treaty.'

'Whatever may be said in Belgium against it and the Conference, two things are certain :

'1. The difficulties experienced by the Conference in settling the matter either in one way or the other, are immense.'

'2. It is but just that the great Powers should feel impatient to see differences brought to an end, which, though in themselves concerned only with small matters, keep the whole of Europe in a state of war-like feverishness.'

'In order to find out whether I had clearly apprehended the part played by the several members of the Conference, I purposely this morning, in the course of conversation with a member of the Con-

[1] 'Art. 12. Dans le cas où il aurait été construit en Belgique une nouvelle route, ou creusé un nouveau canal, qui aboutirait à la Meuse vis-à-vis le canton hollandais de Sittard, alors il serait loisible à la Belgique de demander à la Hollande, qui ne s'y refuserait pas dans cette supposition, que la dite route ou le dit canal fussent prolongés d'après le même plan, entièrement aux frais et dépens de la Belgique, par le canton de Sittard, jusqu'aux frontières de l'Allemagne.'

ference, made a sortie against Palmerston, and said that he seemed on the whole to be more in favour of the Dutch than of the Belgians. From the answer made to this sortie, I obtained the clearest evidence that Palmerston had been the only member who in the Conference had zealously defended the cause of Belgium.'

'The stipulation for the railway from Antwerp to the Prussian frontier, and the free navigation of the rivers, we owe to him alone. Talleyrand, on the other hand, had done absolutely nothing, but at once to give in on all points having a specifically Belgian interest; and only to insist on those in which French interests predominated.'

'I have seen two letters from Paris in regard to the marriage. According to these there seems no difficulty in the way but the uncertainty hanging over the Belgian business. As soon as the King shall have concluded peace, and been universally recognised, it would seem as if there would be the greatest readiness to give the Princess Louise.'

On the following day, October 16, Stockmar again urged the acceptance of the twenty-four articles. The difference between that which Belgium demanded, and that which the Conference granted in regard to territory, and the question of the debt, was not sufficiently

great for it to be said that the welfare of Belgium depended upon it.

'The real welfare of Belgium now depends,' he says, 'on peace being rapidly concluded, on the formation of a good Administration, and on the annihilation of parties in the interior, which latter depends principally on the speedy recognition of the independence of Belgium by the whole of Europe. This is the most certain remedy against both the French and the Dutch party in the country. Moreover, what means would the King personally have at his disposal to protect Belgium against the disadvantages which the verdict of the Conference may possibly involve? Would it be abdication? Why, such an act would not only bring no advantage to Belgium, but entail upon her the greatest disadvantages. It would lead either to a general war, and in that case to a Restoration, or to the union with France, or possibly to a partition. For the King abdication would not possess one single real advantage, although to an excited imagination it might appear otherwise. It is true that the King may suffer a momentary disadvantage from accepting the twenty-four Articles; i.e., there may be a slight loss of popularity with the fickle and ignorant multitude. But for this there is a sovereign remedy. Let him but be an upright, firm, active, intelligent king,

and we shall soon see whether in a short time he will not become the most popular sovereign in Europe.'

'On the other hand, the abdication would ruin him in the eyes of Europe. He would appear weak, unstable, short-sighted, and unequal to the task he had undertaken. The King went to Belgium to maintain the peace of Europe, and to save the cause of constitutional monarchy in that country. That is the mission he has undertaken on behalf of Europe, of the Powers, and of Belgium. That he has met with difficulties in his path is no excuse for him to lay down his arms. The King has had a glorious task imposed upon him, let him show himself worthy of it.'

'Let him not lose a moment in forcing his Ministers to a declaration, as to whether they will retain their offices, if he accepts the twenty-four articles. If they will not, then let him at once form another Ministry. Although I thus urge the King to do everything in his power, that the project of peace may be accepted as quickly as possible, I yet advise him to draw every advantage he can from his personal position as regards the Conference.

'Let him therefore cry aloud against the injustice which the Conference is guilty of against him.[1] Let

[1] Namely, in so far as it was the members of the Conference who had induced him to accept the crown on the basis of the

him abuse that body which is fully expecting to be abused. Let him show in the clearest manner possible that he went to Belgium under perfectly different conditions from those now imposed, and that he has had nothing whatever to do with the later and actual revolutions of the Conference. Let him prove to the Belgians in the clearest manner possible, that he has done everything which lay in his power to bring about the most favourable solution for them. Let the Belgian Ministry cry out equally loudly. But in the meantime let everything be done to induce the Chambers to accept the treaty.'

The serious way in which, in the foregoing letter, Stockmar treats of the possibility of the King's abdicating, proves that Leopold had really expressed his intention of doing so. The acceptance of the twenty-four articles was most painful to the King, as well from the Belgian as from his own personal point of view. Called to the throne in virtue of the eighteen articles, he was now expected to induce the country to renounce a portion of that which it had hitherto been taught to look upon as the basis of its existence, and which he himself had always regarded as the foundation of his throne. He had sworn to the Constitution

eighteen articles, and afterwards refused to enforce the conditions of those articles.

which designated Luxemburg and Limburg as Belgian provinces, and he had moreover taken a separate and distinct oath to maintain the territorial integrity of the kingdom. Was the acceptance of the London project under these circumstances compatible with his personal honour?

Stockmar, who clearly with the utmost anxiety was waiting in London to learn what the King's decision would be, did his best to remove the personal scruples of his master. 'I have spoken to Grey,' he writes, 'who cannot see either in the personal position of the King, or in the oath taken by him, or in the Belgian Constitution, anything which may prevent his accepting the treaty at once. I specially commend to the King's attention these words of a man who, on the point of honour, and in regard to the meaning of an oath, is as scrupulous as the King himself. They are the words of a statesman who well understands constitutions and constitutional responsibility. Lord Grey considers that the King's refusal would cause the greatest perplexities, whilst his abdication would result in the greatest misfortunes for Europe, and would have the most pernicious effects on the reputation and personal position of King Leopold. He assured me that the Conference not only had the means at its disposal of carrying out its resolutions

by force if necessary, but that it would employ those means if occasion should require it. At all events, as far as he himself was concerned, he would not hesitate to employ them if the interest of Europe required it.'

'I asked Bülow yesterday, how the Conference purposed to carry out their decision in the event of Holland and Belgium proving recalcitrant. He replied that "if Holland should attempt to attack Belgium, she would have to deal with the five Powers. If Belgium refuses to accept and fulfil the conditions which the Conference imposes upon her, we shall occupy her territory with an army of execution, composed of French, Prussians, and English." On my repeating this plan of Bülow's to Grey to-day, he said, if Belgium attacked Holland, or Holland assaulted Belgium, what Bülow had said would certainly take place. To the second case, that of Belgium not proceeding to attack Holland, but simply refusing to fulfil the conditions imposed upon her, he would not give a direct answer, but only say that it would lead to fresh difficulties of the most serious kind.'

Probably to lend to his written statements the weight of verbal argument, Stockmar went at the end of October to Brussels. The King and his Ministers came to the resolution of proposing to the Chambers

to accept the twenty-four articles. Juste relates in his 'Life of King Leopold' (p. 163), that the latter had resolved, if the Chamber threw out the twenty-four articles, to dissolve it, and convoke a new one, and if the latter came to the same resolution, then to abdicate. Such an abdication would certainly have had an altogether different character from one having for its object to escape from the twenty-four articles.

On November 1 and 3, the Chambers authorised the King to conclude the formal treaty for the separation of Holland and Belgium, on the basis of the twenty-four articles. The Ministry had previously bound themselves towards the Chambers only to assent to the treaty after having 1, attempted to obtain a few modifications of the same, and 2, after having acquired the certainty that the King would be recognised at once by the Powers. The Conference replied to the notes accordingly addressed to it: 1. That the Powers could not admit of a single modification of the twenty-four articles. 2. That nothing stood in the way of giving to the twenty-four articles the sanction of a treaty between the five Powers and Belgium, in which treaty the recognition of the King would *ipso facto* be implied. The treaty was signed on November 15, 1831. It consisted in a repetition of

the twenty-four Articles, to which the three following resolutions were added, in three additional Articles.

Art. XXV. The five Powers guarantee to the King of the Belgians the execution of the foregoing twenty-four Articles.

Art. XXVI. Peace and amity between Belgium on the one hand and the five Powers on the other, i.e. recognition of the King of the Belgians.

Art. XXVII. The ratifications shall be exchanged within two months at the latest.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BELGIAN FORTRESSES.

History of the Question to the conclusion of the Treaty of November 15, 1831—The Protocol of the Four Powers, April 17, 1831, concerning the dismantling of a portion of the Belgian Fortresses—The French represent this as a compliment paid to themselves—France seeks in vain to conclude a separate convention with Belgium with a view to determining which of the Fortresses should be dismantled—The Belgian declaration of September 8, on Charleroi, Mons, Tournay, Ath, and Menin—Convention of the Four Powers with Belgium on December 14, by which Philippeville and Marienburg are substituted for Charleroi and Tournay—Violent excitement in France—Real ground of this—The connection between the Fortress Treaty and the Treaties of 1814 and 1815—Inconsistency of the French proceedings—Idle threats against Belgium—Belgium suspends the ratification of the Fortress-treaty—France quiets down, as its threats produce no results—Letter of Lord Palmerston's—The note of the Four Powers of January 23, 1832, as a salve to the wounds of France.

In the interval between the conclusion and the ratification of the treaty of November 15, a question briefly touched upon in the foregoing chapter, the so-called question of the Belgian fortresses,[1] gave rise to dan-

[1] A detailed account of the question of the fortresses is contained in the work of General Goblet, at that time Belgian

gerous complications, for the right understanding of which it is necessary to lay before the reader some account of the previous history of the question.

Four out of the five great Powers represented in Conference, viz., Austria, England, Prussia, and Russia, had, to the exclusion of France, signed on April 17, 1831, a Protocol, by which they agreed in principle on the measures which, in the event of the definitive separation of Belgium from Holland, they would adopt with regard to the fortresses built since 1815, at the expense of the four Powers, in the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Powers declared in this Protocol: that the new position in which Belgium would evidently be placed, and the fact that her neutrality would be recognised and guaranteed by France, necessitated a change in the defensive system of the Netherlands—that the fortresses in question were too numerous to be kept up and defended by Belgium—that the inviolability to be guaranteed to the territory of Belgium afforded a ground of security which did not previously exist and, consequently, that a portion of those fortresses, built under wholly different circumstances, could now

Plenipotentiary at the London Conference, entitled, 'Des Cinq Grandes Puissances de l'Europe dans leurs rapports avec la Belgique, par le Lieut.-Gén. Comte Goblet d'Alviella.' 1863.

be dismantled; the four Governments reserving to themselves the right of determining which of the fortresses should be so dismantled, and of entering into negotiations with Belgium on the subject, as soon as that State should have a Government recognised by the Powers.

Stockmar comments upon this Protocol in a letter of September 22, 1831, as follows:

'The idea that the dismantlement of the fortresses was determined upon by the Powers only as a compliment to France is erroneous. As far back as 1815, some of the allied Powers (viz., Austria and Prussia) doubted whether the system of defence for the Netherlands, as proposed and carried out by Wellington, was the correct one. Now that it was clear that Belgium, separated from Holland, was not rich enough, either in men or money, to defend the whole of the fortresses, these doubts of 1815 became all the stronger; and as Wellington no longer sat in the Cabinet, it was natural that the views of the other allied Powers should gain the upper hand. The fear was that the fortresses, imperfectly kept up and defended by the Belgians, would, on the first opportunity, fall into the hands of the French, and so it was resolved that they should be dismantled. It so happened however, that Talleyrand, who was ever on the look-

out to make political capital on his own account, seized the opportunity which thus presented itself, to make his Government believe that the resolution come to with regard to the dismantling of the fortresses, was a compliment to France which *he* had succeeded in obtaining from the four Powers by diplomacy. As this illusion could do no harm to the latter, there was no necessity for disturbing the French in their enjoyment of it.'

The Protocol of April 17 was officially communicated to the French plenipotentiary in London on July 14; and, on the 23rd, Louis Philippe, upon the opening of the French Chambers, proudly announced in the speech from the throne that 'the fortresses, which had been built as a threat to France and not with a view to defending Belgium, would be dismantled.'[1]

During the occupation of Belgium by the French, however, the Government of Louis Philippe endeavoured to come to a direct and separate agreement

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[1] The 'Journal des Débats' at the same time showed its exultation in the following words :—

'La démolition des forteresses de la Belgique est le premier avantage que nous fait l'Europe. C'est le premier aveu *de l'ascendant et de la prépondérance* que la France a acquis depuis sa révolution. L'Europe sentira de plus en plus que la France de 1830, libre, ardente, regorgeant de force et d'activité, ne peut être traitée comme la France de 1815.'

with Belgium respecting the fortresses. The idea clearly was that Belgium might be induced to consent to a selection of such fortresses for demolition as might best suit French interests; and that, with a treaty of this kind signed and sealed, it would be easier to obtain the assent of the four Powers to the selection made. We have already seen that the English Ministers, in their first conversations with Stockmar at the end of August, declared distinctly that England would never tolerate a separate convention in respect to the fortresses, and France was consequently obliged to give up the idea. But she made one more effort. She proposed, in London, that the English Minister in Brussels should be authorised by the four Powers to negotiate with the Belgian Government and a French plenipotentiary in regard to the demolition of some of the Belgian fortresses. The plenipotentiaries of the four Powers thereupon declared, in a Protocol of August 29, that this proposal could not be entertained, inasmuch as the said fortresses had, to a great extent, been built at the expense of the four Powers, though without any hostile intentions towards France, but solely as a measure of general safety; that the four Powers had come to certain arrangements with the sovereign of the territory on which those fortresses were built; that the new Sovereign of Belgium had in

this respect stepped into the position formerly occupied by the King of the Netherlands, and that it would consequently be impossible for the four Powers to allow any other Government to participate in the negotiations respecting those fortresses.

Notwithstanding the failure of this last attempt on the part of France, Belgium went as far as she could to consult the wishes of France, and to satisfy the powerful neighbour to whom she already owed obligations, and whose further help she might eventually require; and the Ministry accordingly gave on September 8 to the French Minister, Latour Maubourg, the formal declaration that, 'King Leopold would take measures, in concert with the four Powers at whose expense the fortresses were chiefly built, for the speedy dismantlement of *Charleroi*, Mons, *Tournay*, Ath and Menin.'

Stockmar always considered that this declaration was a mistake, and that Belgium thereby placed herself in a false position. The real parties to the question of the fortresses were France on the one side, the four Powers on the other. It was not the business of a weak State like Belgium to mediate between the great Powers. In doing so she could only share the fate of the earthen vessel—'Le pot de terre en souffre.' Her interest required her on the contrary

to keep, as much as possible, clear of the whole question, and to advise France to urge her wishes and views in direct communication with the four Powers. The alternative which Stockmar laid down in a letter of December 21 is unanswerable:—

'Either Belgium agrees with the Powers as to the choice of the fortresses to be dismantled, and in that case France requires no promise from us. Or—

'We do not agree with the four Powers, and in that case our promise could be of no use to the French.'

King Leopold then sent General Goblet to London in September with instructions:

1. To reassure the Powers with regard to the declaration made to France by Belgium.

2. To work upon the Conference in the sense of the declaration. In spite of all the efforts made by Belgium, however, the four Powers insisted upon substituting the fortresses of Philippeville and Marienburg for those of Charleroi and Tournay, the demolition of which was desired by the French.

On December 14 General Goblet found himself compelled to sign a convention with the four Powers for the dismantlement of Menin, Ath, Mons, Philippeville and Marienburg. A secret article stipulated that, in the event of the safety of the remaining fortresses being endangered, the King of the Belgians

should concert measures with the four Powers for their security — an article which appeared to the King himself, as he writes on the 17th to General Goblet,[1] very harmless (viz., for France) inasmuch, as it only said: 'Call us to your assistance if your fortresses are threatened, so that France has only to leave Belgium in peace in order to make the article inoperative.' Nevertheless, as Stockmar's correspondence shows, the keeping this article secret was at the time considered a matter of the most anxious care.

As it was, the public treaty and the substitution of Philippeville and Marienburg for Charleroi and Tournay produced a violent storm in France. It would be difficult to understand this on the supposition that the ostensible subject of dispute, i.e., whether Philippeville and Marienburg (according to the wishes of the four Powers) or Charleroi and Tournay (according to the wishes of France) should be dismantled, was the real and secret cause of the great excitement in France. The Duke of Wellington, whose opinion carried the greatest weight in London, considered that Charleroi and Tournay were of more importance in protecting Belgium from the inroads of France than Philippeville and Marienburg, and that probably

[1] Juste, 'Léopold I,' 1re partie, p. 234.

for this reason the French were more anxious for the demolition of the two former fortresses than of the two latter.[1] However, it cannot be supposed that France considered that any interests affecting her existence were compromised, because the fortresses of Tournay and Charleroi were not dismantled, or she would not in the end have accepted the choice of the four Powers. On the other hand, the Government of Louis Philippe was, in the year 1831, honestly inclined to maintain peace. Hence the excessive excitement in France, followed in the end by her submission, can only be explained on the supposition that there was some circumstance which wounded the susceptibility of the French, but that the love of peace eventually gained the upper hand.

And so it was in reality. French vanity was wounded, not so much by the determination to retain the fortifications of Tournay and Charleroi as by the general

[1] General Goblet, in his book on the question of the fortresses, p. 129, remarks that he cannot understand why France made such a stand about Tournay and Charleroi: 'car ces deux places fesaient partie du système également favorable aux défenseurs, quels qu'ils fussent, de la neutralité belgique :' that is, they would serve just as well for the defence of Belgium by France, against any other possible attack. If this is so (we reserve judgment on the technical question), it is only a proof that such an attack from any other side, was not looked upon in France as practically worth consideration.

principle of the fortress-treaty, i.e., the circumstance that the four Powers were resolved to settle, alone, and to the exclusion of France, which of the Belgian fortresses should be dismantled and which retained, *taking as their basis of operations the Treaties of* 1815. It cannot be denied that the fortress-treaty arose from the Quadruple alliance of 1814–15 against France, and was in a certain degree in opposition to the treaty of November 15, 1831. At the very time that the four Powers *joined with* France to guarantee the neutrality of Belgium, they concluded amongst themselves a separate treaty; in reality defending this neutrality *against* France, and securing to themselves separate rights over the Belgian fortresses. Here, then, was a neutral State, guaranteed by the five Powers, and yet, through special provisions arising from the war with France, and directed against France, bound to the remaining four Powers.

France, it is well known, abhors the treaties of 1815, which were really the result of the reaction in Europe against her boundless ambition. She sees in the legitimate opposition to those excesses, committed by her, and in the distrust kept alive by the memory of them, a wrong, an insult; and in this respect the France of Louis Philippe differed in no way from France before or since. The only characteristic of

the France of July was its real earnest determination to maintain peace. She found herself therefore divided between two opposite feelings, of which, however, the love of peace was decidedly the stronger. The natural result was an inconsistent policy in regard to the question of the fortresses.

The Protocol of April 17, 1831, had been, as we saw, officially communicated to the French plenipotentiary in London on July 14. The French Government was not more deceived at that time than afterwards as to the real object of the Protocol, but in its desire to maintain peace it tried to deceive the national susceptibility. To this end it represented the fortress-treaty as a victory won by France; inasmuch as the bulwarks erected by European suspicion on the Belgian frontier were to be demolished by Europe itself, which bowed to the supremacy of France.

The Ministers of Louis Philippe were consequently obliged to abstain from laying any objections before the four Powers with regard to the Protocol, and they accepted it in perfect silence.

But this truly French artifice[1] could not succeed in

[1] The following epigram was composed during the Seven Years' War :—

Le coq français est le coq de la gloire,
Par le revers il n'est point abattu ;
Il chante fort, s'il gagne la victoire,
Encor plus fort, quand il est bien battu.

the long run. The true contents of the Protocol could not long remain secret; it could not be concealed that the four Powers had reserved to themselves the choice of the fortresses to be dismantled, and that no voice in the matter was left to France.

The French Government now found itself in a most awkward position. However much it might wish to protest against any further agreement of the four Powers on the question of the fortresses as emanating from the treaty of 1815, it was too late to do so, after having quietly, and even with feigned satisfaction, accepted the Protocol, which contained the principle of that agreement. It could not but perceive that, if it contested this principle, it ran the chance of a dangerous conflict with the four Powers, and this it did not wish to do. And yet, in the government circles, the 'Gallic nerve' was sorely tried. What was to be done? The first thing that suggested itself, was to attempt to obtain such a choice of the fortresses to be dismantled as would be most for the interests of France. The failure of this attempt naturally increased the excitement. As they were afraid to quarrel in real earnest with the four Powers, they vented their wrath chiefly on that unhappy scapegoat, Belgium. The menaces employed towards that country had a second object, beyond the mere expression of the popular

excitement, viz., to intimidate the four Powers, so that in carrying the principle of the fortress-treaty into execution, they might be persuaded to make some concessions to the *amour-propre* of France. At the same time the inconsistency of its policy proved a serious disadvantage to the French Government, for, though it might vent against Belgium all its anger at the principle contained in the Protocol, yet, having once accepted that Protocol in silence, when the fortress-treaty was put into execution, it could not remonstrate with the four Powers on the principle of the Protocol itself, but only cry out because Philippeville and Marienburg, instead of Tournay and Charleroi, were to be dismantled. But of course these blustering declamations on a point of minor importance caused no alarm ; the four Powers attached no importance to them, as France had raised no objection to the main principle of the fortress-treaty.

With this explanation let us now follow the narrative of the further progress of events as given in Stockmar's correspondence.

Curiously enough it was Talleyrand who had first broached the names of Philippeville and Marienburg, and had given the original impulse to their demolition. 'When, some time ago, and before the Belgian declaration of September 8,' writes Stockmar on

December 20, 'Talleyrand sounded first Bülow and then Palmerston to ascertain whether the retrocession[1] of the ceded cantons with Marienburg and Philippeville were possible, Palmerston replied that the Powers would go to war rather than agree to this, but that if these fortresses caused displeasure to France, no doubt arrangements might be made to dismantle them. 'As soon as Talleyrand,' continues Stockmar, 'saw the mistake he had committed, he never breathed another word about Marienburg and Philippeville. It is, however, probable that in order to cover his blunder he made his Government obtain the declaration of September 8, so that, if at the last it came to the demolition of these fortresses, the fault might be laid at our door. Hence, both here and at Paris he pretended never to have heard of Philippeville or Marienburg—he who had 150 spies everywhere and always knew everything before anybody else.'[2]

[1] These two fortresses and the territory round them belonged formerly to France, and were only annexed to the Netherlands in the second Peace of Paris.

[2] The fact that Talleyrand asked for the retrocession of Philippeville and Marienburg is mentioned in Juste's 'Life of Leopold I.,' p. 173, but it is placed in a different light by Stockmar's letters. Juste says, 'Le prince de Talleyrand imagina un singulier expédient, pour mettre un terme aux débats; il proposa à la Conférence de faire la cession de Philippeville et de Marienbourg à la France.' This represents Talleyrand as mak-

The wounded vanity of France now took the shape of the most insolent threats against poor Belgium.

On December 17 Louis Philippe writes to Leopold:[1]

'I learn with as much astonishment as regret that your Majesty's plenipotentiary has allowed himself to sign a treaty which stands diametrically opposed to the engagements entered into towards me. I therefore confidently expect that this treaty will not be ratified by you, because it is necessary that I should be able to depend upon the assurances you give me.[2]

'Talleyrand,' writes Stockmar on December 16, 'is breathing out fire and flame, because Philippeville and Marienburg are to be dismantled, instead of Tournay

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ing his proposal *after* the four Powers had brought forward the plan for the demolition of Philippeville and Marienburg, and during the later stage of the negotiation in October or November, whereas the truth is that he proposed the retrocession *entirely of his own accord*, and this at a time when there was no question whatever in London of either the one fortress or the other.

We are now able from Bulwer's 'Life of Palmerston,' vol. ii. p. 28, to fix exactly the date of this occurrence. On January 7, 1831, Palmerston writes to Lord Granville: 'Talleyrand proposed to me to-day that France should receive Philippeville and Marienburg in remuneration for employing her interest in favour of Leopold.'

[1] Juste, 'Léopold I.,' p. 235.

[2] The letter closed with the following threatening sentence: 'I cannot doubt that you will join your efforts to mine in order to save France, Belgium, and Europe from the evils which may result from this complication.'

and Charleroi. He says Belgium has not fulfilled her treaty engagements towards France; and pretends that they write to him from Paris that all this is the result of an intrigue, hatched at Brussels. Bülow had openly told him that the maintenance of Tournay as a fortress was a question of life and death for the English Ministry, as dependent on Parliament; and that probably even he, Talleyrand, could not wish that this question should upset the Grey Cabinet.'

'Talleyrand, however, is fond of theatrical effects. If the French Government are wise, they will pretend that they themselves desired the demolition of Philippeville and Marienburg."

In the meantime the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Sebastiani,[1] was talking of a return to the hostile system of 1815 against France, of war being preferable to humiliation, of Belgium being the vassal of the four Powers, of her dishonesty in *pro-*

[1] For the language used by Sebastiani, see Goblet, l. c., pp. 175–191. It will be remembered from the previous chapter how Sebastiani threatened *coups de canon* as soon as he heard of Leopold's candidature for the Belgian Throne. Guizot ('Mémoires,' vol. ii. p. 183) praises in the man 'un jugement libre et ferme, une sagacité froide, une prudence hardie, un courage tranquille.' The French have their own standard in such matters.

posing[1] the treaty in its present form to the Conference behind the back of France, after having given the declaration of September; adding the threat that, if Belgium ratified the 'infamous' treaty of the fortresses, France would refuse to ratify the main treaty (of November 15), and would moreover charge to Belgium's account the cost of the expedition of August; and lastly, that in case Belgium were again attacked, France would leave her to her fate.

Belgium was placed in a very awkward position. The immediate ratification of the fortress-treaty was clearly in her interest, 'because,' as Stockmar writes on December 14, 'the fortress-treaty is a collateral treaty flowing out of the not yet ratified main treaty of November 15. The fact of the ratification of the collateral treaty is a confirmation of the main treaty, the non-ratification of which would thereby be rendered all the less possible.'

It was clear that the refusal of Belgium to ratify the fortress-treaty might serve the then so-called Northern Powers as an excuse to refuse the ratification of the main treaty; for it should not be forgotten that, at an earlier stage of the proceedings on November 14, they had made Belgium's acceptation of the bases of

[1] On the contrary, Belgium only yielded to strong pressure on the part of the Powers.

the fortress-treaty the *sine quâ non* condition of their signature of the main treaty of November 15. Palmerston was urgently pressing the immediate ratification which Stockmar advocated with equal pertinacity (letters of December 14 and 20). 'Palmerston and Grey, however,' he writes, 'consider the whole hubbub as got up between Talleyrand[1] and Sebastiani, and believe that the French will cool down as soon as they have convinced themselves that nothing is to be got by their big words. The French threats against the Belgians are laughed at here. They say with justice: The French did not on the first occasion help you against the Dutch for your own sake, but came because it suited their own convenience. Whatever they may say to-day, they will march to-morrow into Belgium, if the Dutch attack you. They cannot execute their threat not to ratify the treaty of November, because by doing so they would harm themselves most; and, if they talk of making us pay the cost of the expedition in August, the answer given here is, that the French entered Belgium at the wish of the Conference, and that, if

[1] The proof of this seemed to Stockmar (letter of January 3, 1832) to be furnished by the fact that the intended demolition of Philippeville and Marienburg was known at Paris on December 6, whereas the outcry only began on the 15th of the month, after the receipt of a despatch of Talleyrand's, dated the 13th.

they desire to have their expenses paid, it is to the Conference they must apply.'

In Brussels, however, they had so far yielded to the fury of the French, that the ratification of the fortress-treaty was delayed, and that an attempt was made to obtain from the Powers a modification of the treaty, either by omitting the stipulation with regard to Philippeville and Marienburg, or by an additional article suspending their demolition for the present.

Stockmar was against every modification of the treaty. 'Lord Grey,' he writes on December 20, 'considers it highly dangerous to give the Russians, by the very slightest alteration, a plausible pretext for the non-ratification of the main treaty.' 'Even were the Conference (letter of December 21), to grant the article suspending the demolition, I do not see what good would come of it. It would alter nothing as regards the principle, and could therefore neither satisfy nor please the French. On the contrary, it would only do harm; for the matter would get known, and the delay granted would make no difference in the humiliation of which France complains. They would only see therein more "mauvaise foi" than in the immediate carrying out of the demolition. If later on Belgium desired to proceed to the demolition,

the outcry and disadvantage to France would be just the same as now. The only real remedy would be to leave Philippeville and Marienburg altogether out of the treaty; but then this would make it a wholly new treaty, and our non-ratification of the old treaty might be considered by some of the Powers as an "acte de mauvaise foi" and have the worst consequences. Moreover, I do not believe that Belgium will be able to move the Powers to make the desired alterations.'

'If the French Government are desirous of having the treaty altered, it is not sufficient for Sebastiani, Belliard,[1] and Talleyrand to abuse, illtreat and calumniate the Belgian Government; they will gain nothing by such means. If they wish to obtain practical results, they must take official steps with the Powers. They must prove to them that Philippeville and Marienburg do not come within the letter and meaning of the Protocol of April 17, and demonstrate that the French Government would suffer from their demolition. For then, and then only, will the Powers listen to them. All this the King should state as his opinion to Louis Philippe, openly and fearlessly.'

In a letter of the 24th, Stockmar once more calls

[1] The French Minister at Brussels.

attention to the vital importance of the Fortress Question for the maintenance of the Grey Ministry, which, as it was, had a very difficult part to play in face of an opposition, supported by the weighty authority of the Duke of Wellington, and able to rouse public opinion with the plausible argument that the Ministry were allowing the demolition of fortresses for the benefit of France and her vassal Belgium, which, in Wellington's opinion at least, were necessary for the defence and the balance of power in Europe, and had cost more than four millions sterling.

Stockmar was the less ready to allow himself to be frightened by the French complaints as, in common with the English Ministry, he had all along looked upon them as a mere piece of theatrical display. He was strengthened in this opinion by the behaviour of the French after the suspension of the ratification by Belgium. 'In order to afford them the possibility of making counter propositions to the Powers,' writes Stockmar on December 30, 'Belgium, at great risk to herself, has suspended the ratification of the treaty. Have the French in the meanwhile taken any direct steps with the Powers? No—they have done nothing but maltreat us and force us to play their game by taking steps compromising to ourselves. By showing that they only mean to manœuvre at the expense of

the Belgians, and have no intention of doing anything themselves, they prove that their complaint of our "mauvaise foi" is a miserable subterfuge, and their outcry an unworthy attempt and base intrigue.'

And so it turned out, for as soon as the French perceived that nothing was to be gained, they altered their language.

The following letter of Palmerston's to Stockmar on the subject, dated January 1, 1832, will be read with interest.

'My dear Baron,—I have many apologies to make to you for not having sooner returned to you the enclosed letter. I trust that the squabble may now be considered as ended. We have made the French Government understand, that we cannot give way either as to the list of fortresses to be dismantled, or as to the article which stipulates for the maintenance of the rest—and, as they are completely in the wrong in the whole affair, and as, moreover, they have no means of compelling us to abrogate or change our convention, except high words which we do not mind, they will acquiesce, and we shall soon hear no more of the matter. Talleyrand, when he found he was mistaken in supposing we should yield, began to be alarmed himself at the storm he had raised in Paris; feeling that, if they could not carry their point,

his Government were doing themselves much mischief by taking so high a tone, and latterly he has done all he could to pacify them.

'The whole thing' was a piece of personal vanity with the King, Sebastiani, and Talleyrand, and then they embarked Périer[1] in it, who took it up with warmth, but we could not give up permanent interests, either to gratify their vanity or even to give them temporary assistance.

'My dear Baron,

'Yours very truly,

'PALMERSTON.'

And after all—'tant de bruit pour une omelette'—France allowed herself to be appeased by the note of the four Powers, signed January 23, 1832, and proposed by Belgium, which only declared 'that the stipulations of the Convention of December 14, were entirely compatible with the sovereignty, neutrality, and independence of Belgium,' and left the five guaranteeing Powers, *as such*, on exactly equal footing with regard to Belgium. And what had France been fighting for? For Charleroi and Tournay? But with regard to this point nothing was changed by the Declaration of January 23. Or was the

[1] Casimir Périer, then Prime Minister in France.

real matter in litigation this, that France maintained that the treaty of the fortresses established between Belgium and the four Powers separate relations incompatible with her independence, sovereignty, and neutrality? If so, then the satisfaction obtained by France consisted in a declaration of the four Powers that, on that point, she had been mistaken!

But in Paris they were so gratified by that note, that the Cabinet had their especial thanks conveyed to the Belgian Minister in London, M. Van de Weyer, who had framed the Declaration!

CHAPTER X.

RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY OF NOVEMBER 15, 1831.

The Conference extends the term within which the Ratifications are to be exchanged to January 31—Vacillating policy of the three Northern Powers in regard to the Belgian Question generally, and to that of the Ratification in particular—At the beginning of December the idea prevails in London that all the Powers will ratify—Reports of Mr. Chad from Berlin, and Mr. Forbes from Vienna—In the middle of December doubts arise as to Russia ratifying—Hesitation on the part of Prussia and Austria—On January 31, Ratifications of France and England—The remaining Powers keep the Protocol open—Middle of February, Orloff's mission to the Hague—Impatience and warlike tendencies in Belgium—Stockmar advises an attitude of peaceable and quiet expectancy — Interview with the King of England—On April 18 Austria and Prussia ratify, with reservations, and urge certain modifications of the Twenty-four Articles in favour of Holland—On May 4 Russia ratifies, reserving certain changes with regard to some articles to be carried out by a definitive arrangement between Holland and Belgium—The Belgian Plenipotentiary accepts this Ratification—Doubts as to the meaning and practical bearing of the Russian reservation—Stockmar advises the acceptance of the Russian Ratification—One of his reasons, danger of a change of Ministry in England—Dissatisfaction caused at Brussels by the acceptance of the Russian Ratification—The Belgian Plenipotentiary is not, however, disavowed.

THE term within which the Treaty of November 15 was to be ratified, expired on January 15. The 54th protocol of the London Conference, bearing the date

January 11, 1832, extended this period to January 31. On that day an exchange of ratifications took place between France and England on the one hand, and Belgium on the other; the plenipotentiaries of the other Powers moving that the protocol be kept open for them. At length, on April 18, Austria and Prussia exchanged ratifications with Belgium. The Austrian ratifications contained certain reservations; the Prussian were unconditional, and contained no such reservations, but the Prussian plenipotentiary expressed in a separate declaration the same reservations as those of Austria. Lastly, on May 4, the Russian ratification, also containing reservations, followed. We shall, later on, treat of the contents and meaning of these reservations in greater detail.

Marvellous as were the inconsistencies which marked the policy of the three Absolute Powers in regard to the Belgian Question, they are easily explained when we consider: 1. That though these Powers sincerely desired the peace and quiet of Europe, they did not seek to compass this end by following a distinct and positive plan, but, on the contrary, that their attitude was one of expectancy and of waiting on events. 2. That from legitimist motives, and, as regards Russia and Prussia, in addition

to these motives, from family considerations,[1] these Powers were unfriendly to a kingdom which owed its existence to a revolution; and, 3. That the forms which the policy of absolute States take, have naturally a more courtly colouring, and are more guided by personal sympathies and antipathies than is the case with free States. Thus, when it became clear that the separation from Holland was not to be prevented, the absolute courts, out of a desire for peace and a wish to cut short French intrigues and Republican tendencies and to put an end to the Belgian complication, urged Prince Leopold to accept the crown. By doing so they satisfied the requirements of political expediency, and consulted State interests; then they refused to recognise him as King, and by so doing satisfied their legitimist and dynastic cravings. Then, again, they concluded, by means of their plenipotentiaries, the treaty of November 15, by which they recognised Belgium, and guaranteed to her the stipulations contained in that treaty; and now

[1] William I. of Holland, son of a sister of Frederick William II. of Prussia, was married to his cousin, a daughter of the latter; his second son, Frederick, was married to a daughter of Frederick William III., his daughter Marianne to a son of Frederick William III., Prince Albert of Prussia. His eldest son, the Crown Prince, was married to a sister of the Emperor of Russia.

they delayed the ratification beyond the term specified in the treaty, and when they did ratify, they did so with reserves and clauses. We shall see how later on they endeavoured to postpone the compulsory enforcement of the ratified treaty; and, after admitting in principle that the compulsory enforcement was necessary, how they refused to take part in it themselves, and only passively looked on when the Western Powers intervened. Stockmar was much rejoiced at the following remarks on the policy of the Eastern Powers in the Belgian Question, published many years later in Guizot's 'Histoire de mon Temps,' chap. xxii.:—'En reconnaissant la nécessité, elles la subissaient avec cette hésitation et cette humeur qui enlèvent à la modération son mérite et détruisent la confiance qu'elle devrait inspirer. . . . Leur politique aurait pu et dû être nette, uniforme, exempte de contradictions et d'arrière-pensées. Il n'en fut rien. Les gouvernements absolus, quand ils n'ont pas un grand homme à leur tête, sont plus courbés sous leurs préjugés et plus incertains dans leurs actes que les gouvernements libres; malgré leur fastueuse irresponsabilité, le fardeau du pouvoir leur pèse, et pour l'alléger ils se réfugient volontiers dans l'inconséquence et l'inertie. Tout en acceptant ce qui se passait depuis 1830, en France et autour de la France, le bon

sens des puissances continentales fut étroit et court, sans hardiesse et sans grandeur.'

We shall now give the passages of principal interest in Stockmar's correspondence respecting the history of the Ratifications.

At the commencement of December it was firmly believed in London that all the Powers would ratify within the period fixed by the treaty—nothing indeed could seem more natural—since the treaty of November 15 was substantially identical with the twenty-four articles, which had been very favourably received both at Berlin and Vienna.

From Berlin the English Minister, Mr. Chad, had reported on October 24: 'Mr. Ancillon said he was satisfied with the treaty (and he appears in reality to be so); he thinks the territorial arrangements equitable and fair towards Holland.' On November 7 Mr. Chad reports further, 'Mr. Ancillon read to me yesterday an instruction which he sent on the 24th to M. de Truchsesz,[1] in which weighty and numerous arguments, drawn from the state of affairs, are urged to induce the King of Holland to accept the treaty of peace; and it is stated that, if he refuses to do so, he may expect to see a British fleet upon his coasts to

[1] Prussian Minister at the Hague.

enforce his acceptance. Just as Belgium would probably have seen an occupation by a force composed of French, English, and Prussian troops, if a refusal had come from that quarter.'

From Vienna, the British Minister, Mr. Forbes, writes on November 1, 1831: 'Prince Metternich told me that he highly approved of the treaty as fair and honourable to both parties; he said it was such as neither could think of refusing, and expressed his pleasure at this business being at an end.'

About the middle of December, however, symptoms which rendered it doubtful whether Russia would ratify the treaty, began to show themselves. A report of Stockmar's of December 20, contains an account of of what had, up to that date, taken place in Prussia and Austria with regard to the ratifications; and is characteristic of the way in which opinions swayed hither and thither on the subject at Berlin and Vienna.

'The first instruction which Bülow received on the subject from the Minister, Ancillon, was dated November 24, and said that, though the King thought that he (Bülow) had gone to work somewhat precipitately in the matter, nevertheless the treaty would be ratified, and that the ratifications would be sent in a few days for the purpose of being exchanged. Shortly after-

wards Bülow received a second communication from Ancillon, dated November 26, to the effect that immediately after the despatch of his instruction of the 24, Perponcher[1] had come to him with letters from the King (of Holland) and had violently reproached him for the hurry with which the Prussian Plenipotentiary in London had signed the treaty of November 15. The letters of the King of Holland to the King of Prussia contained the most earnest entreaties not to ratify.'

'Thereupon the Berlin Cabinet caused their Minister at the Hague, M. de Truchsesz, to declare that though Prussia would, under all circumstances, ratify within the specified period, she would, by delaying the ratification as long as possible, once more give the King of Holland time to come to a previous arrangement with the Conference. This answer was communicated from Berlin to Vienna, and crossed on the road a despatch from thence, in which Metternich declared that in his opinion the plenipotentaries in London had exceeded their powers. The Conference ought to have given the King of Holland a fixed term within which to accept the twenty-four Articles, and only in the event of his not accepting them within that term,

[1] Dutch Minister in Berlin.

ought it to have proceeded to conclude a treaty with Belgium. When, however, the news arrived in Vienna of the steps taken by Prussia at the Hague, the Vienna Cabinet informed that of Berlin, that Austria would adhere to that declaration, and would, like the Prussian, ratify within the time prescribed.'

'From Russia,' adds Stockmar, 'there are, as yet, no certain news.' Madame de Lieven is reported to have said, 'the Russian Ratification will not arrive before the last day of the term, *if* it arrives at all. Matuscewicz said that he foresaw that his fate would be that of Oubril's [1] (to be disavowed, and the treaty to be left unratified).'

Eight days later, the aspect of affairs had already materially changed.

'Bülow tells me,' writes Stockmar on December 27, 'that the King of Holland is incessantly sending couriers to Berlin, Petersburg, and Vienna; and from what he says I gather that these frequent communications are beginning to tell on the steadfastness of those Courts.' At the beginning of January, it was known that the Emperor of Russia had informed the King of

[1] M. D'Oubril, in July 1806, was sent to Paris to negotiate a Treaty of Peace between Russia and France. The treaty was signed on July 20, but the Emperor Alexander refused to ratify it, the anti-French party having in the meantime obtained the ascendency at Petersburg.

Holland that he would not for the present ratify, but that he advised him to come to an arrangement with the Conference; because, as Prussia was not willing to give material assistance to Holland, Russia, being further off and less interested in the matter, could not do so. It also became apparent, about this time, that Prussia, out of deference to Russia, would equally delay her ratification as long as possible.

There was clearly no reason, when these facts became known, for the Belgians to despair; all that was required was patience, for there was nothing to indicate a 'determination' on the part of the three Powers not to ratify; everything, on the contrary, pointed merely in the direction of delay. The hopes of the Belgians, moreover, could not but rise after the Western Powers had actually ratified on January 31; and on February 9, Stockmar writes, 'Bülow himself and the English Ministers believe in a speedy ratification on the part of the remaining three Powers.' It turned out, it is true, that matters did not proceed as rapidly as this would have seemed to indicate, but still they did go forward, not backward. In the middle of February it was known that the Emperor Nicholas was thinking of sending Count Alexis Orloff to the Hague, to make one last effort to persuade the King of Holland to come to an amicable arrange-

ment. This mission kept the diplomatic world on the 'qui vive' during February and March. It ended by Orloff's making a solemn declaration at the Hague, on March 22, which established the fruitlessness of his efforts, threw on Holland the responsibility of all the consequences, and declared freely that, though Russia would not participate in coercive measures for the execution of the twenty-four Articles, she would, on the other hand, just as little protect Holland, if she reopened hostilities, against the measures the Conference might take for the maintenance of Belgian neutrality.

The result of the Orloff mission therefore was a fresh step onwards in the direction favourable to Belgium. Nevertheless, this long state of uncertainty was becoming intolerable to the Belgians, who began to despair of a peaceful solution and to think of warlike measures. Armaments became the order of the day, and foreign officers, especially Poles, were induced to take service in the Belgian army. Stockmar remonstrated persistently, even passionately, against these warlike manifestations.

On February 9 he writes, 'my advice is, that we should wait quietly for the remaining ratifications. Belgium is placed, towards Holland, in a position in which a passive attitude on her part is all to her ad-

vantage. Holland has, by the execution of the treaty of peace, to receive lands and monies, which she must therefore do without, until that time comes. Belgium only suffers on the side of Antwerp, and from the absence of the free navigation of the Meuse and Scheldt.' 'I protest with all my strength,' he continues on February 17, 'against warlike undertakings on our part. The situation is as clear as the day: *We delay the performance of the obligations imposed upon us by the treaty of peace, and remain quiet. If the Dutch attack us, we shall drive them back, with or without the aid of the French.* The present position of political affairs is that of the barrel of gunpowder and the lighted candle; one spark may blow up everything. I would not be the man to drop that spark. The responsibility would be an European one.'

Then again, on February 20, 'I most earnestly warn against any hasty steps. Nobody, least of all the English, would wish to begin a war about this dispute between Holland and Belgium. Although the French and English are bound by their ratification to see to the execution of the twenty-four Articles, I should yet consider any pressure, exercised on the part of Belgium to hasten this execution, as a grave political error. I entreat, therefore, to the fullest extent of my powers of entreaty, that no one may incur the guilt

of such a fault. The measures for carrying out the twenty-four Articles can, in virtue of the treaty, only be taken after a previous understanding with France and England. Belgium has no right to press these measures forward single-handed and prematurely. If we are attacked, we have a right at once to demand assistance; if, on the other hand, we attack, it may be a matter of doubt, whether England would not draw a distinction between "offensive" and "defensive," and maintain that no liability existed to assist us in an offensive movement. The demand for Polish officers does not by any means please me. If there is no war, these foreign officers will only be a burden to us and, in the meantime, it cannot be but that the appointment of so many foreign officers should mortify those of the country. I lift up my voice in warning; I have often before been a Cassandra.'

'Whatever our future may be,' he continues on March 2, 'at present we are passing through a crisis, and no sensible physician disturbs a crisis by violent remedies. I, therefore, most solemnly protest against all warlike intentions, and insist that the next six weeks should be left altogether in the hands of diplomacy. For months past I have prophesied to my friends here a change in the temperature of Dutch patriotism and enthusiasm. The Belgians, if they

will only wait and behave reasonably, will witness this change. Therefore, once more, no hurry—ce serait tout gâter. There is but one opinion on the subject here. As regards the fears, expressed repeatedly, that the Dutch will attack the Belgians, I think it no longer necessary to say anything. Attacks trumpeted forth to the world are hardly meant seriously.'

On April 1 he writes, 'England and France are both of them alike averse to war. Whoever gives occasion for war will "eo ipso" become the personal enemy of Lord Grey and of Casimir Périer. Let no doubt therefore for one moment exist in regard to the fact, that Grey would just as little allow the Belgians to attack the Dutch as the Dutch to attack the Belgians. For the King of the Belgians, the prime object of policy must be to prevent a partition of Belgium. If he avoids war, I do not see how the Dutch can compass this partition. But, if he himself begins war, he will open Pandora's box, from which all manner of new combinations may fly out. He may thereby perhaps himself give to France an opportunity of withdrawing from the treaties, and of trying on a new policy resulting in a partition. I, therefore, once more solemnly protest against all warlike intentions. For the present, we have nothing to fear from external danger. Having reached this point, why

should we, by imprudent behaviour, conjure up this danger afresh? For what can we possibly attain by means of war? There are only two alternatives possible:—1. *Success.* But success itself would have its dangers; a number of unreasonable pretensions would at once wake up again amongst us, the passions of the contending parties would be inflamed afresh, and this alone would be sufficient to postpone peace and render its ultimate attainment more difficult. And might not the Powers take occasion, from our success, to intervene, or to find a pretext for once more changing their views in regard to us?

'2. *Defeat.* I need not describe what the King's position would be, if he were obliged to confess to himself, that he had, of his own accord, wantonly brought about a second "déconfiture."

'The obstacles placed by the present state of things in the way of the internal administration of the country, and the harm done to commerce and industry, the pernicious influence exercised over the political temper of the Belgians, and even the damage inflicted upon the personal position of the King, would disappear like molehills before the mountains which would arise in one night from a war.'

'Of one thing I am absolutely certain, viz., that as

soon as the five Powers have ratified, King William will, for every moment he delays signing the peace, do double the amount of damage to Holland that he can do to Belgium. For though it is true that the five Powers may desire to avoid using coercive measures towards Holland, it is equally certain that they neither wish nor can take such against Belgium.'

'Let us now examine the dangers which can threaten us from within. Such dangers can only come from the discontented, e.g. in Liége, Antwerp, and Ghent. If really serious disturbances were to break out, the Orangists would, with the sanction of the Chambers, have to be declared enemies of the country, and to be treated as such. It is for this that we have an army. If the army proved unfaithful, nothing would yet be lost: a treaty would be concluded with France, stipulating for an auxiliary corps; the Chambers would be convoked, the treaty would be sanctioned by them, and so the means be found to maintain the Constitution and the laws, and to punish traitors and Orangists.'

'Thus would I act in the King's place, and patiently await the future.'

These exhortations to a peaceful and expectant attitude were backed by the counsels of the King of England, who sent for Stockmar on April 3.

'I found the King well,' writes Stockmar, 'and very gracious. He first enquired after the health of His Majesty, and next as to the present state of the internal affairs of Belgium. Thereupon he pronounced a panegyric on King Leopold, who had done everything which an honourable and wise man could do, and who was entirely in the right path. His Majesty's principal wish was that King Leopold should keep along this path, and should not allow himself to be led astray, either by the King of Holland or by his own impatience. The really important thing was to maintain peace, and, therefore, he entreated King Leopold not to allow himself to be provoked by anything. If he were attacked, (which His Majesty did not believe would happen,) it was a matter of course that he would use every means in his power to meet force by force, but all he prayed and hoped for, was that King Leopold would not be the aggressor.

'As for the King of Holland, *who was completely in the wrong*,[1] he held him to be *mad*,[1] and believed that Holland would find it impossible, for any length of time, to remain upon her present war footing. He was convinced that the Dutch would now begin to calculate that the whole affair was costing too much,

[1] These words are, in the original, given in English as the *ipsissima verba* used by the King.—*Trans.*

and would after all be of no use. He advised prudence all the more, because he was convinced that the Dutch were only looking for a pretext to destroy Antwerp.

'Moreover, he had no later than yesterday received the assurance of all the Powers that they intended to ratify. He, therefore, once more asked for a little patience, and desired at the same time to assure His Majesty of his great friendship and goodwill.'

These councils of an expectant policy were justified by a further step in advance on April 18, on which day Austria and Prussia ratified. The reservations with which they accompanied their ratifications, had reference to the rights of the Germanic Confederation, in connection with the Articles in the treaty of November 15, bearing on the cession or exchange of a portion of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, then a member of that body.

For, after Articles II. to IV. of the treaty had stipulated the cession of a portion of Luxemburg to Belgium, in exchange for a territorial compensation in the Province of Limburg, Article V. provides:—

'S. M. le Roi des Pays-Bas, Grand-duc de Luxembourg, s'entendra avec la Confédération germanique et les agnats de la maison de Nassau, sur l'application des stipulations renfermées dans les Articles II. et IV.,

ainsi que sur tous les arrangements que les dits Articles pourraient rendre nécessaires, soit avec les agnats ci-dessus nommés de la maison de Nassau, soit avec la Confédération germanique.'

The Germanic Confederation naturally demanded that, if a portion of Luxemburg were taken from it, it should be territorially indemnified; an indemnity eventually obtained through the Dutch portion of Limburg. A convention on this subject was, however, impossible so long as Holland had not concluded peace with Belgium, or recognised the territorial arrangements of the treaty of November 15. There remained, therefore, for the present, nothing but to reserve the claims of the Germanic Confederation, as was done by the perfectly justifiable declarations of Austria and Prussia. The Belgian Plenipotentiary, on the other hand, could content himself in regard to these reservations with the counter declaration: 'that he simply referred to the guarantee given to Belgium by the five Powers, upon which he placed the utmost reliance; that reliance being founded, as it was, upon the treaty of November 15;' for, according to Article XXV. of this treaty, the Powers had guaranteed to the King of the Belgians the execution of all the foregoing articles, and, consequently, that of Articles II. to IV.

At the same time, the Austrian and Prussian

Plenipotentiaries, each for himself, made a declaration substantially identical, to the effect that it would now be the business of the Conference, to take into consideration such modifications of the twenty-four Articles as, without prejudice to the main provisions, were admissible in favour of Holland and might be accepted by Belgium.

At length, on May 4, Russia declared herself ready to exchange ratifications. The Russian document, however, contained the clause, 'sauf les modifications et amendements à apporter, dans un arrangement définitif entre la Hollande et la Belgique aux Articles IX, XII, et XIII.'[1] A separate declaration of the Russian Plenipotentiary stated that the definitive arrangement between Holland and Belgium, referred to in the Act of Ratification, ought, in the opinion of the Emperor, to be one freely come to between the parties (un arrangement de gré à gré). The Belgian Plenipotentiary, Van de Weyer, accepted the Russian ratification, but declared in regard to the above reservation that:—

'Without denying that the twenty-four articles con-

[1] Article IX. refers to free navigation of the rivers; Article XII. to the continuation of a road or canal on Belgian territory as far as the Meuse, through Dutch Limburg to the German frontier; Article XIII. to the Belgian share in the common debt of the late United Kingdom of the Netherlands.

tained points with reference to the execution of which Belgium and Holland might, of their free accord, come to an understanding, he nevertheless reserved for every eventuality, the right of Belgium to fall back upon the engagements entered into by the five Powers towards her.'

There was room for doubt, 1, as to the meaning, 2, as to the practical importance and bearing, of this Russian reservation.

If the meaning went no further than to lay down that Belgium and Holland were to have the possibility accorded to them of coming to an understanding 'inter se' respecting modifications of Articles IX., XII. and XIII., there was clearly nothing prejudicial to the interests of Belgium. But if the meaning was that Russia did not undertake any guarantee for the execution of the Articles in question, or, in other words, excepted these three Articles from her guarantee of the twenty-four, then, theoretically at least, her reservation might be considered as a notable limitation, as regards Belgium, of the guarantee given to her. The practical importance of this limitation, depended principally on the value that could be attached to the active co-operation of Russia, in obtaining the execution of the twenty-four Articles. Now, as a matter of fact, no value was attached, or could be

attached, to it ; and, therefore, on this side, and so far, the Russian reservation was of no consequence.

But there was an antecedent question of considerable importance which required to be answered, before a judgment could be formed on the real bearing of the Russian reservation, viz., what effect the defective Russian ratification would exercise upon the efficiency of the entire treaty, and more especially upon the efficiency of the engagements entered into by the remaining Powers? Did the treaty consist of five separate treaties, severally contracted by each of the Conference Powers with Belgium, and merely for convenience sake amalgamated into one document, so that each Power became independently pledged towards Belgium ; or, did the five Powers stand towards Belgium in the position of a unit, in so literal a sense that *none* were bound except if, and so far as, *all* were bound? Did each Power become definitively bound by its own ratification, or only by its own combined with those of all the rest? If the latter were the case, the limited Russian ratification undoubtedly invalidated the treaty partially ; nay, it might even be maintained that, as the treaty was an indivisible whole, the defective ratification of one signatory invalidated the liability of all the other Powers, and thus prevented *any* obligation from coming into life. Both

views were admissible. It was certainly probable that none of the Powers would, for itself alone, have concluded the treaty of November 15, with Belgium; that none would have concluded it, except with the knowledge that the remaining four would sign it simultaneously; but yet it did not follow from this, that each would make the continuance of the engagements taken and ratified, depend upon the fact, that all the other signataries ratified without reservations or limitations.

The Belgian Plenipotentiary, Van de Weyer, and Stockmar, who consulted together as to the mode of dealing with the Russian ratification, both held the first of the two views given above as the correct one, in regard to the treaty of November 15. They also knew that this view was shared by the English and French Governments, both of whom, despite the imperfect Russian ratification, considered themselves as fully bound. The calculation, therefore, stood as follows:

The Russian ratification, whatever its form, was in itself a gain from the Belgian point of view, as involving the Russian recognition of the independence and neutrality of Belgium, and of the Belgian monarchy. On the other hand, the reservations made by the Russian Government were, to say the least, open

to different interpretations. What Russia would or could make of them, the future alone could tell. But, as matters then stood, there were no practical disadvantages to be feared. No active intervention, either for or against Belgium, was to be expected from Russia; and those Powers from which alone Belgium could promise to itself to receive active assistance—England and France—did not attach to the Russian reservations the meaning that it absolved them from *their* liability. Consequently, the reasons for accepting the Russian ratification altogether outweighed those for not accepting it. Were the contrary view conceivable, it was clearly not in Belgium's interest to put it forward.

To these considerations, which forced themselves on Van de Weyer and Stockmar,[1] another was added, resulting from the position of the Grey Cabinet, which was at the time engaged in the struggle for the Reform bill, out of which it appeared by no means certain that it would come victorious.

The Russian ratification took place on May 4; on the 7th, the Ministry was beaten in the House of Lords, and the Duke of Wellington was sent for to form a new Cabinet, which, it is true, he did not succeed

[1] We have given above the substance of several long letters of Stockmar's.

in doing, thus leaving Lord Grey in office. We will let Stockmar himself proceed.[1]

'We ratified on Friday; on Monday the Grey Ministry was defeated. Wellington is Premier, and Aberdeen Minister of Foreign Affairs. But Wellington and Aberdeen had previously declared: *that as far as they were concerned, they would not consider the twenty-four Articles as binding until all the Powers had ratified; inasmuch as a treaty, jointly concluded by the five Powers, became null and void by the withdrawal of a single signatary.* Ancillon had expressed the same opinion; Palmerston, on the other hand had, in opposition to Ancillon, contended for the contrary view.'

'On Saturday, the danger in which the Grey Ministry stood was already so great, that Wellington's former assertion forced itself on my mind, and I could only see therein a further ground for the exchange of ratifications. A few days later, with the Grey Ministry fallen, Russia might have altogether refused to ratify.'

In Brussels, however, the acceptation of the Russian ratification met with the most decided disapproval. It was complained of as if it had annihilated the treaty—the recall of Van de Weyer was talked of,

[1] Letter of May 13.

and he was, in fact, sent for to Brussels to justify himself. The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Muelenaere, in his printed report to the Chambers on May 12, gave expression very plainly to his discontent. 'The Belgian plenipotentiary,' he says, 'was not authorised to accept a limited ratification. I regret that he did not, at the risk of a fresh delay, take upon himself to refer the matter to his Government. He was no doubt influenced by the consideration that the point of importance was, to place the treaty of November 15, as soon as possible, beyond the reach of any possible change of Ministry, and he yielded to the force of circumstances which he was better able to judge of on the spot than the Government at home.'

Van de Weyer was consequently blamed at Brussels, but was not recalled; for after all, the suicidal theory that the Russian ratification annihilated the treaty could not be adhered to: a view of the matter which is well illustrated by the criticism of Talleyrand, as reported in a letter of Stockmar's of May 14:

'Talleyrand said to-day to Palmerston: "We have hitherto believed that there existed a Belgium and a Belgian Government; but after what I hear of the views prevalent there in regard to the Russian ratifi-

cation, one is forced to the conclusion that the Belgian Ministers are determined not to believe either in their own existence, or in that of Belgium. The result of all this can only be a partition."'

The report of the Minister Muelenaere, above quoted, shows that, though the ill-humour continued, the Ministry did not dare to give expression to views which would have cut the ground from under their feet. 'Tout en déplorant,' he says, 'que la ratification russe ne soit pas pure et simple, il y aurait mauvaise foi, je dirai presque déraison, à méconnaître les grandes conséquences politiques de cet acte. Pour la Russie surtout, la question belge n'était, ni dans la dette, ni même dans les limites; elle était placée plus haut. Il s'agissait de savoir si la destruction du royaume des Pays-Bas érigé par les traités de 1815, serait sanctionnée, si l'indépendance et la royauté belges seraient reconnues ; et ces questions, il faut bien l'avouer, se trouvent irrévocablement et unanimement résolues au profit de notre cause. Quant aux autres questions, il ne faut pas s'exagérer la portée des réserves ; les Puissances qui ont ratifié purement et simplement n'en restent pas moins liées.'

CHAPTER XI.

EXECUTION OF THE TREATY OF NOVEMBER 15, 1831.

Protocol of the Conference of May 4, 1832, which distinguishes between the 'unalterable' provisions of the Treaty of November 15 and those admitting of modifications by the mutual consent of Belgium and Holland—Belgium refuses to enter into negotiation with Holland, with reference to the latter, until the evacuation of the Belgian territory by the Dutch—Hence no progress in Belgian affairs till September —Description of the policy pursued by the Powers during this period —The three Northern Powers—Prussia—Russia—The Russo-Dutch loan—Austria—France—Talleyrand's attitude in London, and his relations with Louis Philippe—Plan for the division of Belgium—England—As early as July, Palmerston speaks of coercive measures against Holland—Belgium's attitude, in refusing to negotiate until the evacuation of her territory, renders the adoption of coercive measures impossible—Holland pretends to the Conference that she is ready to make concessions to Belgium—Stockmar's journey to Brussels in order to induce the Ministry to give up their 'system'—His letter to Muelenaere (middle of August)—Lord Palmerston's proposal of mediation ('Thème de Lord Palmerston') early in September—Stockmar conjointly with Van de Weyer and Goblet succeeds in obtaining Belgium's consent to negotiate with Holland on the basis of the 'Thème'—The result is to show that Holland has no idea of an amicable arrangement—The Conference agrees on October 1, in principle, to the employment of coercive measures —The three Eastern Powers are, however, only in favour of measures of pecuniary coercion, and even for these desire delay—The Western Powers oppose this delay—End of the Conference—Anglo-French Treaty of October 22, 1832, respecting the measures to be taken against Holland—Execution of those measures—Capitulation of Antwerp on December 23—The Convention of May 21, 1833, establishes a provisorium favourable to Belgium—Final settlement of Belgo-Dutch Question by the Treaty of April 19, 1839.

On May 4, the day on which the Russian ratifications were exchanged, the Conference drew up a Protocol, to the effect that it considered the treaty of November 15, 'as the unalterable basis of the separation, independence, neutrality, and territorial status of Belgium;' that it was incumbent upon the Conference to bring about a final transaction (une transaction définitive) between that country and Holland; that, in doing so, the Powers would endeavour to remove all difficulties in regard to the execution of the treaty of November 15, by means of arrangements between the parties concerned (par des arrangements de gré à gré entre les deux parties); lastly, that in the meanwhile they would not allow of a renewal of hostilities between them. At the same time the Conference called upon the Dutch and Belgian plenipotentiaries to declare, whether they were furnished with the necessary full powers to conclude a 'transaction définitive.'

It will be seen from the above that the Protocol of May 4 establishes a distinction between the various stipulations of the treaty of November 15. Those having reference to the separation, the independence, the neutrality, and the territorial status of Belgium, were to be considered as unalterable. The rest were to admit of modifications made by the mutual consent of the parties concerned, who were invited by the

Conference to enter into direct negotiations on the subject. The distinction thus made was a concession on the part of the Western Powers to the views and reservations expressed by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, with regard to the future progress of the negotiations on April 18, and May 4, upon the occasion of the exchange of ratifications.

The Belgian Ministry met the demands of the Conference by laying down the principle, that any negotiation with Holland, respecting points in the treaty of November 15, which admitted of modification, must be preceded by a beginning, at least, in the carrying out of measures for the execution of those points which did not admit of modification, viz., the territorial—by the evacuation of Belgian territory on the part of the Dutch troops. Belgium, which, since Van de Weyer's departure on May 30, had been represented in London by General Goblet, took her stand immovably on this point until September, during which time the Conference endeavoured, but in vain, to push matters on, by various proposals addressed to Holland, which were none of them accepted.

The extracts from Stockmar's correspondence, which we subjoin, in connection with this period of fruitless discussion, in which the Belgian affairs made not one step in advance, have not been selected with a view

to the details of the diplomatic transactions, but only in so far as they characterise the general policy of the Powers.

'Prussia, Russia and Austria,' he writes on June 3, 'appear, with some slight differences, to stand on the same line. The state of things in Poland, in Italy, on the Rhine, and in other parts of Germany, gives them a common interest, and makes their union even closer than it perhaps was some time ago. Even in Vienna they have no confidence in the state of things in Germany. The three Powers continue to feel the strongest disinclination to compel the King of Holland, by force of arms, to accept the twenty-four Articles. The reasons they give are the old ones, their just horror of sanctioning, through any act of theirs, the principle of revolution and its results, viz., the election of a king and the deprivation of a legitimate sovereign. They are of opinion, therefore, that their policy ought to be, to give way step by step, and only to sanction anything favourable to Belgium, in so far as they can thereby prevent greater evils arising to themselves. They further believe that the best policy for themselves, considering the actual state of Europe, is one of expectancy. They fancy they may win thereby, and that they cannot lose. It is France they are thinking of, when they argue thus. The

Foreign Ministers in Paris are almost all of them ultras, and some of them narrow-minded to the highest degree. They all hang together with the Carlists, nourish the same hopes and wishes, and report to their several Governments in a similar sense. I do not believe that the three Powers, at the present moment, desire war, or that they will commence war in connection with the Belgian Question; but they will do so, the moment that war appears to them a lesser evil, compared with the possible success of a democratic movement in Europe.'

A letter of July 12 contains the following, on the policy of *Prussia*:

'I have this day read a report of the audience, given by the King of Prussia to Prince Frederick of the Netherlands, when the latter took leave. From this report it is certain that the King wishes for peace, and for the maintenance of the treaty of November 15. He told the Prince in the most distinct terms that what was done was not to be undone; that the King of Holland must submit; and that he, as King of Prussia, would under no circumstances make war for the sake of Holland.'

A despatch of Ancillon to the Prussian Minister enumerates four possible methods for forcing the King of Holland: 1st, The threat to remit part of the pay-

ments which Belgium is bound to make to Holland. 2nd, Coercive measures against the Dutch mercantile navy. 3rd, Blockade of the Dutch ports. 4th, Entrance of a French army into Belgium. In instructing Bülow to talk over these four methods with Palmerston, Ancillon tells him that Prussia would admit the first three, but would oppose the fourth with all her might; and enjoins him to declare this in the most distinct manner to Palmerston. 'If the French march in,' says the despatch, 'the Prussians will march down the right bank of the Meuse, and Palmerston will see that in such a case, with the best intentions on the part of the French and Prussians to keep the peace, no one could answer for the consequences.'

It was, indeed, afterwards proved that this very energetic language was a mere idle threat, such as on many occasions was employed on the part of Prussia; whereas the King's moderation and love of peace, were a firm and immovable foundation in the midst of the vacillations of the Berlin Cabinet.

The policy of Russia was characterised according to Stockmar in two words—Intrigue and insolence of language; and yet Russia had, in regard to the Belgian Question, tied her hands towards England in a very peculiar fashion.

As few readers are likely to be acquainted with the

earlier history of this peculiar case, we must refer concisely to it.

Russia had, a long time ago, contracted a loan of 50,000,000 florins in Holland. By a convention, made May 19, 1815, between England, Russia, and the Netherlands, England and the Netherlands undertook to provide, each of them, for one half of the interest and paying off of this debt. These engagements, entered into towards Russia, were joined with the reservation that these payments were to cease 'if, at any time before the entire liquidation of the debt, the Belgian Provinces were withdrawn from the sovereignty of the King of the Netherlands.'

According to the letter of the Convention, therefore, England's liability could now, by the secession of Belgium, be considered as at an end. The English Ministers, however, by a fresh treaty, dated November 16, 1831, recognised the Convention of 1815 as still in force. They were of opinion that the reservation made in the treaty, judged according to its spirit and not its letter, had reference only to a possible severance of Belgium as the result of conquest and external violence, and not to the action of internal forces; and that England could all the less withdraw herself from the treaty of 1815, that it was not only through no fault of Russia's that the severance took place, but

that the Imperial Cabinet had not even approved of it, and had shown their willingness to prevent it by offering to place 60,000 men on foot against all eventualities; and had, at England's desire, given up the idea of armed intervention, and taken part in the conclusions of the Conference, establishing Belgium's independence.

For the execution of the new treaty of November 16, 1831, however, as it was concerned with a money payment, the sanction of Parliament was required. The Ministry had a hard battle to fight; but, nevertheless, gained the day in the House of Commons on July 12. 'By the success of the Government in the Russo-Dutch loan business,' writes Stockmar, 'the Belgian affair has been the gainer. The speeches and arguments on the part of the Ministry were admirable, those of the Opposition wretched. I should think that the second article of the Anglo-Russian Convention is sufficiently plain:—"Par suite des mêmes considérations, S. M. l'Empereur de toutes les Russies s'engage si (ce qu'à Dieu ne plaise) les arrangements arrêtés pour l'indépendance et la neutralité de la Belgique, et au maintien desquels les deux Hautes Puissances sont également liées, venaient à être compromis par les événements, à ne se prêter à aucun arrangement nouveau, sans concert préalable avec

S. M. Britannique et sans son assentiment formel." I should fancy this article ought to open the eyes of the Dutch in regard to Russia.'

A point to which Stockmar calls attention in a letter of July 23, is well worthy of being noticed, viz.: 'That it was from the moment that England, as above mentioned, had more than sufficiently fulfilled her obligations to Russia, by adhering to the spirit of the first treaty with her, although the letter was unfavourable to Russia—that it was from this moment, and not before, that Russia came forward with reservations in favour of Holland.'

Respecting the policy of Austria, Stockmar writes on July 12, 'Metternich, whose rule it is always to do one thing after another, and to finish one thing before he begins the next, appears to be anxious about the state of things in Germany. It occupies him at the present moment exclusively, and I therefore believe that he really wishes to see our Belgian business definitively settled.'

In order to obtain a substantial pledge for the policy of France, Stockmar had not ceased to urge the necessity of hastening the marriage with the Princess of Orleans. At length, King Leopold, on the occasion of a personal visit to Compiegne, at the end of May, had obtained a definite promise from Louis Philippe;

though the marriage, owing to repeated postponements, did not take place before August 9. Yet, during the whole period of which we are treating, the policy of France appeared to Stockmar to be of a hesitating, vacillating, not to say double-dealing kind. 'I do not overlook the possibility,' he writes on June 3, 'of Louis Philippe himself, and his Cabinet, having no settled plan or system to follow. Périer's death (May 16, 1832) must have served to increase this vacillation.' On the other hand, Stockmar ascribed the hesitating character of the French policy more particularly to the influence exercised by Talleyrand over Louis Philippe. On July 18, he describes the attitude of the French Government as made up of three elements: 1. Excessive fear of putting themselves on a bad footing with the Absolute Governments, in connection with the Belgian question; 2. Indifference in regard to Belgium, owing to their idea that she had been stolen from them, and that her prosperity would be an injury to France; 3. A suspicious leaning towards the Dutch.

Respecting Talleyrand's relations to Louis Philippe, and his attitude in London, the following passage occurs in a letter of July 4.

'Talleyrand has, from the very first, had his own plan in regard to Belgium. What that plan was, I

am unable to say; but this I know for certain, that whatever Louis Philippe and Sebastiani may have promised in regard to the Belgian question, the French Government never prevented Talleyrand from doing exactly what he had made up his mind to do. I think it more than probable that if we could read the letters sent from Paris to Talleyrand, we should find that what was written to London, was always very different from what was written to Brussels. I believe that, from the outset, Talleyrand always represented the Belgian question as a very dangerous one, and that he told his Government,—if you do not let me have my way, you will see whither this "liberal" treatment of the subject will lead you. Louis Philippe, who placed unbounded confidence in the *finesse* and *savoir faire* of Talleyrand, and who considered himself in the light of his pupil, doubtless wrote to him from the very commencement, "Rest satisfied, I will let you have your own way; there are two people who embarrass me with their impatience, the one is Leopold, the other Périer. I shall always satisfy them with talk, and give orders that the most strict injunctions be sent to you, but leave you in the meantime free to do what you think right."

'I repeat, what Talleyrand's real plan may be, I do not pretend to know. But it is clear that he con-

sidered an apparently good understanding with the Dutch, as indispensably necessary for carrying it out. With all his great tact and knowledge of men, he could not prevent this friendship from appearing suspicious to a good many people ; and more particularly from making the English Ministers occasionally distrustful. Mareuil (French Minister at the Hague, who, for a short time in June, took Talleyrand's place in London), who at all events is a pupil of his, even if his relationship is not of a closer kind, does not of course wish to be unworthy of his master. The consequence is that he exaggerates the behaviour prescribed to him by Talleyrand, and is too friendly to the Dutch, too hostile to the Belgians. Could anything, for instance, be more incorrect under existing circumstances, than that a French Minister, should drive to the King's levée as he did the other day, in the carriage of a Dutch chargé d'affaires? From a letter of the Queen of the French, it appears that King William of Holland is anxiously asking for Talleyrand's return to London. Certain it is that this is done at the instance of Madame Lieven and Wellington, who both of them know that Talleyrand treats the Dutch as his very best friends.'

We see that Stockmar would not assert positively what the *arrière-pensée* of Talleyrand was. There

were, however, many indications which seemed to point to its having been a partition of Belgium.

In the letter of June 3, already alluded to, we read, 'Long ago, a person has assured me, that there existed a secret treaty between France and Holland for the partition of Belgium, and that this treaty was the work of Talleyrand.' Then again in a letter of July 3, he says, 'In the "Messager des Chambres," dimanche, 1 juillet, 2me édition, there is an article from the Hague in which King William lets the cat out of the bag. It is stated therein, that he had proposed the partition to France, and he complains of the shortsightedness of the French and Belgians, in not preferring the partition to the independence of Belgium.'

The letter of June 3 contains the following with regard to English affairs, in so far as they relate to the Belgian question:

'John Bull,' writes Stockmar, 'has once more put Grey into the saddle. How long he will remain there, is another question. The circumstances under which Grey's resignation[1] took place must have contributed

[1] The Grey Ministry resigned because the King refused to create a new batch of peers to ensure the safety of the Reform Bill; they were, however, recalled after the Duke of Wellington had in vain attempted to form a new administration.

not a little to make the King exceedingly unpopular. After the exertions which the King made personally in favour of Wellington, it is impossible that he can any longer have any real inclination for Grey; the present Ministry, therefore, must be regarded by him as one forced upon him by public opinion, and he will seek the first opportunity to get rid of it. To this must be added that the Queen, the Fitzclarences, the ladies in waiting, Salisbury, and Howe, all of them keep up the connection with Wellington.[1] The latter will not find it difficult, as soon as the Reform Bill has been settled, to beat the Ministers on some other question in the House of Lords, and thereupon make a second attempt to upset Grey.'

'I have never had reason to suppose that King William personally takes a serious part in foreign politics. It is his nature to interest himself in them only *en passant* and by fits and starts. Already before Grey's resignation, Wellington appears to have

[1] Queen Adelaide, daughter of Duke George of Meiningen, sister of the wife of Duke Bernhard of Weimar, who was in the Dutch service, was inclined to the Tory side in politics, and as Princess of Meiningen, and on account of her relationship to Duke Bernhard, not well disposed to Leopold of Coburg and the Belgian business. The Fitzclarences were the illegitimate, but acknowledged children of King William IV., formerly Duke of Clarence, and the actress Mrs. Jordan. Lord Howe was Lord Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide.

insinuated to the King, that the Grey Ministry allowed themselves to be too much led by France. Then Grey had some disagreeable passages with the King on this very subject, and so it is probable that the King will worry the Minister on foreign questions more than before. I believe it is true that King William desires to see the Belgo-Dutch business brought to a conclusion. I think that he is personally not unfriendly to Leopold, and that he has no particular affection for the King of Holland. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that when the Tories who surround him, begin talking of his "ancient ally," and say that he ought to help him, he will always be ready to do more for Holland than for Belgium.'

'The English public does not take the slightest interest in us. That the Belgians did not fight properly last August, has destroyed all sympathy for us, even amongst the Liberals. The habit of considering the Dutch as allies, and of treating them as such, renders the greater part of the nation Dutch in its inclinations. I am convinced that the Ministry would be left in the lurch by the House of Commons, if they were to call upon it to make a sacrifice in favour of Belgium.

'It is this last consideration which makes Grey so cautious. Grey and Palmerston undoubtedly wish on personal and political grounds, to break the obstinacy of the King of Holland. I am convinced that if they

thought they would be supported in their measures by Parliament, they would to-morrow blockade the Dutch ports. But they fear that the Dutch might defend themselves, that the blockade might force the Government to declare war, and that Parliament would refuse to give them a shilling for this purpose. Palmerston, however, is convinced that the time for hesitation has gone by, that it can lead to nothing, and will only do harm.'

'Another circumstance which increases Grey's irresolution is the death of Périer. He told me himself, several months ago, that he reposed great confidence in the character of that Minister, and that he believed that the peace of Europe depended upon Périer's remaining in office.'

'Since Grey no longer knows on whom he can place reliance in the French Cabinet, he is doubly cautious, and is forced for the present to handle the three Absolute Powers like raw eggs. Nothing but the sincere, upright co-operation of France, and her honest determination to bring the Belgian business to a conclusion, on the basis of the twenty-four Articles, will give Grey the courage to act. But France invariably at the critical moment hangs back, and excites England's suspicion, thereby rendering the only settlement impossible.'

At how early a date, on the other hand, Palmerston was convinced of the necessity of coercive measures against Holland, and had made up his mind to have recourse to them, appears from a letter of the 18th of July:

'Palmerston has told me of a conversation which he had some days ago with Van Zuylen. He declared to the latter that England and France were determined, in case of necessity, to resort to coercive measures, and that they would have recourse to them, even in the event of the other three Powers not making common cause with them. He deemed it right that the King of Holland should be informed of this, all the more so as he knew that His Majesty flattered himself, that coercive measures against Holland would be unpopular in England, and that the Government would not have the courage to have recourse to them. He declared, therefore, in the most positive manner, that the Ministry were in a position to believe, that they ought to take such measures in the interests of England, and that they would therefore employ them, whether it was popular or not.'

It is true that this determination to have recourse to coercive measures, was a conditional one only, and that nearly four months elapsed before such measures were employed. Even then, this would not have taken

place, had Belgium continued to adhere to the position, which up to that time had been taken up by her, viz. not to enter into any negotiation with Holland respecting the stipulations of the treaty which admitted of modifications, before the Belgian territory, and particularly Antwerp, was evacuated by Dutch troops. The Ministry of Muelenaere had formally pledged themselves to the Chambers, not to deviate from this principle, and the King likewise had emphatically spoken in this sense on public occasions. In the meanwhile, about the beginning of August, it became obvious to the unbiassed observer in London, that Belgium, if she adhered to that system, would not only never move forward or get nearer the object she had in view, viz. the compulsory execution of the treaty of November by the Powers; but, on the contrary, would rather drift in the opposite direction, by bringing on herself the appearance of improper obstinacy and unpractical litigiousness. For though it was true that at the beginning of August, Holland had rejected all the proposals made at the Conference, the Dutch plenipotentiary had nevertheless declared, that he was authorised to enter into negotiations with Belgium, and his language was calculated to lead to the belief, that Holland might be induced to make substantial concessions, by which Belgium would either retain the

real advantages of the treaty, though possibly under other names, forms, and circumstances, or be compensated for real concessions by equivalent advantages. With the dispositions of the Powers above described, it could be foreseen with certainty, that not one of them would be moved to take coercive measures against Holland, until a last attempt had been made to settle the question in an amicable way, and for the success of such an attempt the attitude of the Dutch plenipotentiary seemed to offer some slight hope, or, at least, pretext. Under these circumstances, Stockmar came to the conclusion that no step could be taken in a forward direction, until the system of 'no negotiation before evacuation,' a system which led straight into a 'cul de sac,' had been abandoned, and the negotiations were once more set afloat in London. In order to convert the Minister Muelenaere to this view, Stockmar, with the agreement of some of the plenipotentiaries of the Conference, went to Brussels at the beginning of August.

The following memorandum, which bears no date, refers to this mission undertaken by Stockmar:

'The Conference wished to find out from the Belgians themselves, in an unofficial manner, what the points were, on which they could not give way, in order that the Conference might not expose itself to

the risk of again making an useless proposal, by suggesting what Belgium could not accept. The difficulties in the way of the King and his Ministry entering upon anything which would have the look of a new negotiation, or of a modification of the treaty of November, were well understood by the Conference. Goblet has not during the last three months missed an opportunity of impressing these difficulties upon them; nevertheless the Conference, which certainly understands business better than the Belgian Ministry, and knows that difficulties are not insurmountable, and that much may be done by finding an ingenious form, hoped that Belgium would find a way out of the difficulty. It hoped so all the more, that it knew how highly necessary peace was to Belgium, because it had the firm conviction that the Belgian army would be beaten again, if hostilities were once more to break out. It wished, therefore, that the Belgian Government, by sending Van de Weyer back to London, would make it possible to take up the thread of negotiation under the rose, and come to a result which the Belgians might afterwards be got to accept publicly. In this sense, and principally to get Van de Weyer sent back, I was sent quasi-officially to Brussels. When I arrived there I found everybody occupied with reviews, preparations for the approaching mar-

riage, &c. For real work and for my mission nobody had time, or ears, or will. I spoke with Muelenaere, and saw that he was thoroughly averse to sending back Van de Weyer. He was like a stick, and I was convinced that his fear of the Chambers and of newspapers completely mastered him ; that he was ready to sacrifice to this fear, the welfare of the country and the general peace, and determined to maintain the system of doing nothing, and therefore would give no new instructions to the plenipotentiary in London.'

Stockmar returned to London in the middle of August, having failed in the principal object of his mission, though he had persuaded the Belgian Government to send Van de Weyer back to London, who arrived there on the 18th of August, but without fresh instructions.

In the meanwhile Stockmar had not given up the attempt to bring Muelenaere round to another way of thinking. Immediately on his return to London, he addressed a long letter to that Minister, in which he recapitulated in a detailed and methodical manner, the statements and arguments which, at Brussels, had formed the theme of his conversations. This letter appears to have produced so strong an impression on the Belgian statesmen of that day, that long passages

out of it have been quoted in the various works which have appeared on the political events of that time.[1]

Stockmar's arguments were the following:

'1. Belgium demands that Holland shall, as a preliminary measure, accept the twenty-four Articles and evacuate the Belgian territory, and will then be ready to negotiate respecting the execution or modification, as the case may be, of the Articles still requiring to be executed or admitting of modification. By so doing Belgium is acting against her own interest, and Holland could not play her a worse trick than by simply acceding to her wishes. For Belgium would have in exchange for the evacuation of Antwerp, to give up a far more considerable territory on the Meuse; and would by the mere fact of evacuation, before the settlement of all disputed points, be by no means delivered from the state of war which was so oppressive for her; as the King of Holland would still have it in his power, to oppose indefinitely the solution of the conflict desired by Belgium, and especially the regulation of the navigation on the Scheldt, and the Meuse, and the rivers between the Scheldt and the Rhine.

'2. For Belgium the simple continuance of the

[1] Cf. Th. Juste: Lebeau, p. 80; Goblet, 'Mémoires Historiques,' vol. i. p. 145.

status quo would be far more advantageous. She would not suffer from it as regards her material interests, as much as would Holland; and it might be hoped that in this way the latter would, from mere exhaustion, be forced after a time to give in.

'3. This process, however, would undoubtedly be a slow one, and would require on the part of the country, an amount of determination, patience, and cool resolution, which can hardly be expected from it. This alternative, therefore, breaks down on moral grounds.

'4. On the other hand, in a war against Holland, Belgium would have much to lose, little to gain; and the Powers, moreover, would not allow of hostilities.

'5. Consequently nothing remains, but to let the matter be further worked through the Conference, and consequently to enter into negotiations with Holland, as desired by the Powers. This would not be disadvantageous for Belgium. It is true that the Ministry has positively pledged itself to the Chambers, to insist upon the preliminary evacuation, but then it lies in its power to prove the impossibility of obtaining the evacuation without war, and the inadvisability of going to war.

'6. All dangers to the substance of their bargain, are to be guarded against by a formal protest, couched in the following terms, which the Ministry must lay

before the Conference, and the Chambers. Let them declare :

'By the verdict given by the Conference in its character of umpire, and by the acceptance of that verdict on the part of Belgium, the twenty-four Articles have become the public law of that country. Belgium must, therefore, insist upon their fulfilment, and has a right to demand the execution of those twenty-four Articles at the hand of the Conference. She has demanded it, and will not cease to demand it. The umpires reply to this repeated demand, that they cannot use coercive measures to bring about the execution, until they have lost all hope of the result being attained in an amicable way. The manner in which the twenty-four Articles have been imposed on Belgium, renders it impossible for her to assist the Conference in its endeavours to solve the question in an amicable way. If the Conference, however, considers this method still possible, it must attempt it unaided. If it can prove to Belgium that the means for attaining this end will not only not be hurtful to her, but most possibly turn out to her advantage, she will not refuse to take them into consideration, and eventually to accept them. Until then she declares in the most solemn manner, that nothing which the Conference may attempt with a view to an amicable settlement

can be allowed to prejudice the rights of Belgium, as guaranteed by the twenty-four Articles.'

This chain of argument does not yet lead to formal official negotiations with Holland, but only to an exchange of ideas between the two parties in London, by means of the plenipotentiaries of the Conference. Still the Minister Muelenaere remained immovably fixed to his point. He sent Van de Weyer back indeed to London, as we have seen, but without new instructions.

Stockmar, on his side, held equally firmly to his opinion, and continued to exert himself to induce Belgium to enter into negotiations, before the evacuation, under the idea that by so doing she would either succeed in getting at a satisfactory arrangement with Holland, or in obtaining the coercive measures. As he was acquainted with the favourable sentiments which Lord Palmerston and Lord Grey entertained towards Belgium, as well as with the caution which it was incumbent on them to observe, it was necessary for him to act in entire concert with them. For them it was impossible to have recourse to coercive measures, before another attempt at an amicable arrangement had been made. For this purpose Lord Palmerston drew up, after several separate interviews, partly with the Dutch, partly with the Belgian plenipotentiaries,

partly with the members of the Conference, a new proposal of arrangement on the points in dispute, which he showed confidentially first to the Dutch plenipotentiary, and then, at the beginning of September, to the Belgian. This so-called 'Thème de Lord Palmerston' was substantially such as Belgium could accept, and, if she did accept it as the basis of a negotiation to be opened with Holland, it offered the great advantage of representing an ultimatum approved of *ab initio* by the Conference.

All Stockmar's endeavours, therefore, were now directed towards persuading Belgium to agree to a negotiation being opened in London on this basis. In doing so there were personal difficulties to be overcome. The two Belgian plenipotentiaries, General Goblet and M. Van de Weyer, adhered completely to Stockmar's views, and he considered both these eminently gifted men as indispensable to their execution. But they were on no good terms with each other, and Stockmar's first task was to make peace between them, which he succeeded in doing, though not without trouble. Upon this the plan of campaign was decided upon in Stockmar's rooms in London. Goblet undertook to proceed to Brussels with the 'Thème de Lord Palmerston,' and to bring over the King, whose confidence in the system of Muelenaere had long

since been shaken, to the definite acceptance of the principle of a negotiation with Holland before the evacuation, and on the basis of Lord Palmerston's proposals. If the Minister Muelenaere opposed this, or refused to undertake the execution of the plan, it was arranged that Goblet should undertake the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This plan succeeded perfectly. On September 9 Goblet arrived in Brussels. The King was soon won over, and took the further execution of the matter into his own hands with great firmness. The Ministers sent in their resignation, because they conceived themselves bound by their former declarations to the Chambers and to the country, not to enter upon a new path. On the 15th Goblet became Minister of Foreign Affairs *ad interim*. On the 20th Van de Weyer declared in London that he had the necessary powers to enter into a direct negotiation with Holland, without prejudice to the rights accruing to Belgium out of the treaty of November; upon which the King reserved to himself the right of falling back at any time, in the event of a rupture of the negotiations with Holland, should such a course seem good to him.

And now matters advanced quickly at the Conference, and the Belgian Question made a great step in advance. The negotiations of the Conference with

the Dutch plenipotentiary, at once showed that the latter had not even powers to negotiate on the basis of Lord Palmerston's 'Thème.' The entire edifice which had been built up on the supposed desire for peace, imputed to Holland, crumbled to pieces; the English Ministry were furnished with the necessary proof of the fruitlessness of all attempts at an amicable arrangement, and were thus enabled to determine upon coercive measures, with the approval of public opinion. In the sitting of the Conference on October 1, the eventual employment of coercive measures against Holland was in principle admitted upon all sides. The three Eastern Powers, however, declared that they would not participate in measures of material force, but only eventually take part in coercive measures of a pecuniary kind, whereby the right of Belgium to make deductions from her share in the debt would be recognised. Even here, however, they asked for a further delay, in order that the Prussian Cabinet might have time to give a last warning to Holland; but England and France refused to accede to this proposal, and the Conference therewith came to an end. It was from that moment clear, that the Western Powers alone would proceed to coercive measures against Holland, and that the Eastern Powers would maintain a passive attitude. Several

weeks, however, elapsed before France and England would come to a definite agreement, with regard to the measures of coercion to be employed. The grounds for this delay were to be found partly in France, partly in England. In France there was a change of Ministry in the beginning of October. In England King William experienced a great repugnance to the employment of a French army, for the purpose of overcoming the opposition of Holland. This will be the proper place to lay before the reader the passage from a memorandum of King William IV. of January 14, 1835, respecting the Belgian Question, in which His Majesty himself describes his policy as follows:

'The change of Government in France had been acknowledged at once and without hesitation by Lord Grey's predecessors in office, and there had been no intervention in the struggle between the King of the Netherlands, and his revolted Belgian subjects. But the endeavours to render its effects less disastrous to the House of Orange, which were used by the successive Governments of this country, were defeated by the obstinacy of the King of the Netherlands, and by his jealousy of the Prince of Orange, his son, in whose favour there was every prospect of a successful reaction; nor was it until every hope of a more desirable

arrangement had been destroyed, that His Majesty's Government countenanced the views of Prince Leopold to the sovereignty of Belgium, one of its objects in doing so being to counteract the designs of the King of the French, who sought to place the crown of Belgium upon the head of one of his own sons, and thereby to pave the way for its annexation to France.

'It is not His Majesty's intention to trace the Belgian Question through its various stages and endless intricacies and obstructions, but he is bound to state that the delay and impediments thrown in the way of its settlement, are to be ascribed chiefly to the continued obstinacy and the tergiversation of the King of the Netherlands.

'To conquer these, various expedients were adopted, with and without the concurrence of the Northern Powers. Those to which they did not subscribe, were the blockade of the Dutch ports and the attack upon Antwerp. His Majesty admits that he readily sanctioned the first of these expedients, and that he would as readily have agreed to the adoption of measures yet more calculated to press upon the financial resources of Holland, persuaded as he was that these would have a better prospect of bringing the question to a speedy issue, without increasing the risk of a general collision on the Continent. But His Majesty

from first to last objected to the attack upon Antwerp by a large French army, whose continued occupation of Belgium he apprehended, and the presence and the operation of which might have produced those collisions on the Continent which His Majesty was so desirous to avert, not only from his anxiety to preserve peace, but from his sense of the equivocal position in which they might have placed England. His Majesty objected to this measure also as being of local effect, and tending to rouse rather than subdue the national feeling of the Dutch, hinging so much upon calculations of gain and loss, which could not be affected by the possession of Antwerp.'

So far King William. He finally, however, gave in to the pressure of his Ministry, and consented to the French expedition against Antwerp. The English Ministry was principally moved by considerations having reference to France. The Ministry of October 11[1] (Soult, Broglie, Thiers, Guizot) felt the most pressing necessity, in view of the opposition, to

[1] After Périer's death (May 1832) the Ministry remained in office under Soult, as President. On October 11 it was entirely remodelled, in consequence of the entry of Broglie (Foreign Affairs), Thiers (Interior), and Guizot (Public Instruction), so that though Soult remained President, it was looked upon as a new Ministry, and is called in France the Ministry of the 11th of October.

strengthen itself in public opinion by energetic action in foreign affairs. 'Le ministère Broglie était mort sans Anvers,' writes King Leopold to General Goblet (Juste, ii. p. 36), 'et le ministère anglais a jugé plus sage de laisser faire que d'avoir un ministère de l'extrême gauche qui menait à la guerre générale.'

At length, on October 22, England and France concluded a treaty respecting the course to be taken by them. They first determined to demand from the King of Holland that by November 2, he should promise to evacuate Belgian territory by the 12th. In case of refusal they resolved to lay an embargo upon Dutch ships, lying in their respective harbours, and to seize those on the sea by their cruisers. If the Belgian territory were not evacuated by November 15, a French army was to enter and obtain the evacuation by force.

The King of Holland remained deaf to the summons of the Western Powers. The embargo was laid on November 5, on the 15th the French army entered, on the 19th the siege of Antwerp began, and on December 23 that fortress capitulated. The final result of the Anglo-French intervention was the convention concluded between the Western Powers and Holland of May 21, 1833, which secured to Belgium an armistice, to last until the conclusion of a definitive

treaty with Holland; the freedom of navigation of the Meuse and Scheldt; the continuance of the 'status quo' in Luxemburg and Limburg, and consequently an advantageous provisorium, in the enjoyment of which she remained undisturbed till the year 1838. At length, on March 14, 1838, Holland declared herself ready to accept the treaty of November 15, 1831. It was now the business of Belgium to give up those parts of Luxemburg and Limburg which, according to that treaty, were to fall to Holland, and which up to that time remained in her possession. She struggled violently against it, but was forced to give in, owing to the unanimity of the Great Powers, who would not change anything in the territorial stipulations of the treaty, and were only disposed to alter those touching Belgium's share in the debt. Belgium was consequently obliged to sign the definitive treaty on April 19, 1839, in which, after all, she was let off the arrears of debt up to January 1, 1839, and 3,400,000 florins of the yearly interest.

CHAPTER XII.

SETTLEMENT OF THE QUESTION OF KING LEOPOLD'S ENGLISH ANNUITY.

1834.

Liquidation of debts occupies a considerable time—Gives rise to attacks against King Leopold—Radical tendencies of the day—Motions of Mr. Hughes and Mr. Hall in the House of Commons—Intrigues of Mr. Gronow—Attitude of the King's political friends—Stockmar's view—Prospect in January that the liquidation of the debt will be closed in April—Mr. Robinson's Motion, February 11—Sir Samuel Whalley's Motion—Lord Palmerston's letter to Stockmar of March 9, 1834—Definitive settlement of the 'Trust' Question.

STOCKMAR had undertaken after King Leopold's departure to settle the business of the annuity. The letter to Lord Grey afforded the basis for this settlement, which resolved itself into two operations:—

First, the liquidating the pecuniary liabilities and outstanding debts which the Prince had left in England.

Secondly, *after this operation was concluded*, the handing over the annuity to trustees, who, after the payment of certain charges (keeping up of Claremont, payment of salaries and pensions to the persons who had belonged to the Prince's English household, sub-

scriptions to certain charitable institutions, &c.), were to pay over the surplus of the 50,000*l.* into the public Exchequer.

This business was, down to the year 1834, a source of endless trouble, anxiety, and vexation to Stockmar. We will not inflict the details upon the reader, as they are destitute of historical interest, and will confine ourselves to bringing out such facts as are characteristic of the state of things then existing in England.

At the moment of his departure Prince Leopold was not in a position to estimate the amount of his debts. It came out little by little that they reached the sum of 83,000*l.* Amongst these, it is true, there were liabilities to the extent of 16,000*l.* which the King had thought it incumbent upon him to undertake for his sister the Duchess of Kent. As over and above these sums, the current English expenses (those which were afterwards to be paid by the trustees out of the annuity) amounted to 20,000*l.* a year, it is not to be wondered at that the liquidation should have dragged on till the year 1834. It is equally easy to understand that in those days, and under the circumstances which then prevailed, this should have given rise to unfavourable reports and to attacks against the King.

The King had the reputation of excessive parsi-

mony, a reputation based upon a wilful and malicious misinterpretation and misrepresentation of subordinate trifles. 'One of the things which the English best understand,' says King Leopold himself in a letter of March 14, 1840, 'is the art of calumniating. For inasmuch as a "character" is in England considered as something positive and tangible, every effort is made to destroy it; for instance, as there was not much to be said against me, my avarice was the theme selected to damage me. Mistakes made by my first comptroller of the household, Baron Hardenbroek, and a few imprudences, such as the sale of fruit from my farms, were worked up into charges against me with a persistency which, little by little, did me the greatest injury.' After the King's accession to the crown, reports were repeatedly spread, to the effect that he had taken large sums of money from England to Belgium; and as for some time no repayments were made to the Exchequer, the opinion here and there gained ground that the letter of the Prince to Lord Grey, promising the appointment of trustees had been a mere blind, a mere comedy. The Reform movement had brought Radicals and demagogues to the surface, who made political capital of the supposed misery of the people, urged the necessity of economical reforms, and indulged in

attacks and calumnies against persons in high position. These people seized on the question as to what had hitherto been done with the proceeds of the annuity, and what was in future to be done with them, as a welcome theme for declamations suited to their audiences.

On August 16, 1832, Mr. Hughes gave notice in the House of Commons of his intention, if he should have the honour of a seat in the next Parliament, of moving for a return of the sums paid into the Exchequer out of the annuity, by the trustees.

Soon after the beginning of the session of 1833, Mr. Hall moved for a return of the sums paid back to the State, out of the annuity, since July 1831. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could only reply that no such payments had taken place, and Mr. Hall thereupon withdrew his motion. But Mr. Robinson could not help remarking that the people had a right to expect that a large sum should already have been paid into the Exchequer; it was, moreover, a great question whether the Prince still had a real right to any further payment on the part of the State.

At the end of 1833 the secret police of Brussels reported that the Radical Member of Parliament Mr. Gronow, who had been staying for some time at Brussels, was intending in the next session of Parlia-

ment to move, first, for an enquiry respecting the sums paid back by the King out of his pension, and, secondly, for the entire withdrawal of the pension. Mr. Gronow was at the time engaged at Brussels, in secret enquiries respecting a sum of 35,000*l.* which it was said had been sent to the King from London to Belgium; he especially desired to find out whether this sum had been expended in Brussels, or had been sent on to Germany for the purchase of a property there. He hoped to be able to use the results of his enquiries, instituted at various bankers and financiers, for the purpose of a telling Parliamentary speech against King Leopold.

Stockmar saw himself, in view of the threatening storm, more or less abandoned by the so-called political friends of the King, all of them Liberals. 'It is natural,' he writes on February 11, 1834, 'that they should have but little inclination to take our part in a money transaction, by which they would themselves run the risk of becoming unpopular. With few exceptions, they endeavour to frighten me by representing the case as desperate. I am told that there is an ultra party, who are determined upon obtaining the withdrawal of the entire pension, and that, do what I will, it must sooner or later come to this, because the King has, after all, nothing more to look for in

this country, and because the House of Commons is omnipotent. My answer is the following: As long as in this country it is admitted that the King possesses rights, those rights rest on the letter to Lord Grey. These rights I shall defend without giving up one jot or tittle of them. Against violence and injustice I cannot of course prevail, but before it comes to this, I have still got one chance for the defence. We have been advised in various quarters, to lay before Parliament, or the public, a detailed account of the debts; but my duty imposes upon me the necessity of not giving up the principle of the letter of His Majesty to Lord Grey. This principle is the following: Prince Leopold abandons his claim to the enjoyment of his annuity upon certain conditions. The letter does not say, "I have got debts, and will lay them before Parliament; and if the latter deems it right that I should pay them, then, after their liquidation, my annuity, subject to certain charges, shall be returned to the Exchequer." No; the letter says, "I have got debts; as soon as these are paid I shall," &c. This makes the whole difference, and it follows from this, that I can lay no account of the debts either before Parliament or before the public; for were I once to admit that anyone had a right to enquire about the nature of the debts, I must necessarily admit the

right of the same person to decide as to whether they should be paid or not. But this admission would not merely affect the liquidation of the debts, but the entire principle of the letter to Lord Grey; the right of interference would then extend to the determination of the sums, to be paid out of the annuity for pensions, charitable institutions, and the keeping up of Claremont. But in the maintenance of that, which I have described as the principle of the letter, there are yet other and more important considerations involved. The King in that letter made a generous offer to the State under *certain conditions*. Until now the Government and Parliament have tacitly accepted those conditions. Should it turn out, however, that these conditions were no longer considered satisfactory, the King would have the right, as long as any justice remained, to withdraw his offer and revoke the whole of his letter to Lord Grey.'

Holding fast to these principles, Stockmar awaited with calmness the attacks in the House of Commons. In the meantime, however, the position changed materially for the better. As early as January, it could be foreseen with certainty that in the following April, after the next quarter of the annuity had been paid in, it would be possible to discharge what remained of the debts, and for the first

time to hand over a large surplus to the Exchequer. By this means the sting of the attacks threatened by the Radicals was removed. Parliament and public opinion had received Prince Leopold's letter to Lord Grey with satisfaction. All that they really cared about was, that it should be executed. The desire to withdraw the pension altogether, was confined to the Radicals, whose real weight was out of proportion to the loudness of their voices. It was the delay in the execution of the letter which had caused dissatisfaction and distrust. Were the public once convinced that the liquidation of King Leopold's debts was concluded, and that the payments to the Exchequer would begin at a definite and not too distant period, and that then the trustees promised in the letter to Lord Grey would begin their functions, the discontent which existed was sure to disappear, or at all events to be so weakened that no dangerous results need be feared. For this purpose Stockmar hastened as early as the beginning of February to address a written communication to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the permission to make public use of it, in which he stated the fact that, the liquidation of the debts would be closed in the course of April, and that there would then be a large surplus to be paid into the Exchequer.

The indefatigable Mr. Robinson had given notice of a motion on the 11th of the month, for an account of the sums paid back by King Leopold to the State, since his accession to the throne. The Ministers endeavoured in vain to induce him to withdraw his motion, by showing him privately the communication which Stockmar had made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He brought it forward on February 11, and in the speech which he made on the occasion the following passages occur: 'His decided conviction was that King Leopold could not as an honourable man continue to receive the annuity. It was monstrous to contend that Leopold could retain his 50,000*l.* a year after he had ceased to owe allegiance to the British Crown, and had become the sovereign of an independent State.' With reference to the reservations attached by the King to his renunciation of the annuity, for the payment of pensions to his former servants, the keeping Claremont in habitable repair, &c., Mr. Robinson remarked that the King might have taken his servants with him to Belgium, and provided for them there; and he asked what was meant by 'habitable repair.' Under that name the whole pension might be eaten up. The statement that the Prince had made debts, over and above the annual income derived from the annuity,

must cause great astonishment, as the general impression was that he was of rather parsimonious habits. After Mr. Hall had seconded the motion the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp, rose. He read out the communication addressed to him by Stockmar on February 2, declared that the reports that a portion of the pension had gone abroad for the private objects of the King and the payment of His Majesty's servants, were without foundation, but showed himself very weak, half-hearted, and superficial in repelling the attacks made against the King. Instead of saying, 'The Prince has an indisputable right to his pension, which cannot be taken away from him without the most flagrant injustice; his renunciation was an act of pure magnanimity, and it is consequently indelicate and mean to criticise the way in which he fulfils his intention and the conditions which he attaches to that fulfilment'—instead of speaking in this tone, Lord Althorp almost expressed himself in the tone of a suppliant. He could not believe (such was the burden of his speech) that the House would withdraw from the Prince the means required for fulfilling the objects described in his letter to Lord Grey. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was followed by the well-known demagogue Cobbett. Referring to the pressure of taxation, he

argued that the further payment of the annuity was based neither on law nor equity, and that it must be abolished altogether. The Radical Colonel Evans followed suit; after him Sir Samuel Whalley, a mad doctor, moved by way of amendment to appoint a select committee, to enquire into the application of the annuity which the King had renounced. He also expressed his astonishment at the great amount of debt, inasmuch as the Prince had always been what the Scotch called 'a prudent man.' The Speaker declared the amendment inadmissible. Mr. Hume thereupon expressed a doubt whether the King, having ceased to owe allegiance to the Crown, was capable of continuing to draw his pension, and expressed his opinion that the House should reconsider the whole question of the pension. Lord John Russell having, on the other side, declared it to be unfair to worry the King, with reference to the reservations made by him in his renunciation, the mover, Mr. Robinson, concluded by asking what had become of the 135,000*l.* which had been paid in the shape of annuity since the King's accession to the throne, observing that it was probable that the King had just put the money into his pocket. Thereupon the motion, nobody opposing it, was passed.

Nevertheless, the violence of the attack was spent.

The Radicals, it is true, did not give way; Sir Samuel Whalley had already given notice for March 27 of a fresh motion, for the appointment of a committee of enquiry into the way the annuity had been spent. Stockmar represented to Lord Grey that the King would never submit to such an enquiry, and obtained from that Minister the promise that the Government would resist the appointment of a committee. In reply to a letter which he wrote in the same sense to Lord Palmerston, he received the following characteristic letter:—

'March 9, 1834.

'My dear Baron,—I have many apologies to make to you for not having sooner acknowledged the receipt of the papers you sent me last week, and for which I am much obliged to you. The case seems to me as clear as day, and without meaning to question the omnipotence of Parliament, which it is well known can do anything but turn men into women and women into men, I must and shall assert that the House of Commons have no more right to enquire into the details of those debts and engagements which the King of the Belgians considers himself bound to satisfy before he begins to make his payments into the Exchequer, than they have to ask Sir Samuel Whalley how he disposed of the fees which his mad

patients used to pay him before he began to practise upon the foolish constituents who have sent him to Parliament. There can be no doubt whatever that we must positively resist any such enquiry, and I am very much mistaken in my estimate of the present House of Commons if a large majority do not concur in scouting so untenable a proposition.

'My dear Baron,

'Yours sincerely,

'PALMERSTON.

'The Baron de Stockmar.'

And so it turned out, for Sir Samuel Whalley's motion came to nothing. The House having adjourned on March 26, he put it off to May 13; but before this date Stockmar had already paid several thousand pounds into the Exchequer, as the residue after the liquidation of the debts. On May 13, Sir Samuel Whalley not being in his place when the motion was called, it fell to the ground.

The trustees were named the same year in virtue of a deed of appointment signed by the King on August 4, and to the day of His Majesty's death paid 30,000*l.* annually, and even more, into the public Exchequer.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHANGE OF MINISTRY IN ENGLAND.

1834.

Stockmar leaves England—Lord Palmerston's statement on the change of Ministry in England in 1834.

In May 1834 Stockmar left England. He had for a long time been out of health, and his uninterrupted application to business tended greatly to aggravate his condition. He sought the repose and quiet of his home. Moreover, he had arrived at the close of a distinct period of his life. His former English sphere of activity was closed. The kingdom of Belgium had passed successfully through the first great crisis of its birth, and in Belgium itself no place had been found which Stockmar could occupy. Thus between the years 1834–36 there occurred a long pause, which afforded him rest, and which he spent in Coburg, until fate called him to a new sphere of activity. The extracts which we give from his papers, during this period, consequently refer for the most part to negotiations with which he was not personally concerned.

Lord Palmerston's Statement regarding the Change of Ministry in England in 1834.

After Lord Grey's resignation on July 8, 1834, the Whig Ministry was reconstituted under Lord Melbourne, but was dismissed by the King on November 12, on the pretext that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp, who had been the leader of the House of Commons, having been called to the House of Lords by the death of his father, Lord Spencer, the Ministry had lost the necessary preponderance in the Lower House. A statement by Lord Palmerston gives us clearer information concerning this transaction.

'Foreign Office, Nov. 15, 1834.

'As soon as the death of Lord Spencer was known, and Melbourne had had time to communicate with some of his colleagues, as to the arrangements rendered necessary by Lord Althorp's removal to the House of Peers, Melbourne wrote to the King, to propose going down to Brighton, to confer personally with His Majesty upon the state of affairs; and by appointment he went down on Thursday, the day before yesterday. He stated to the King that, as the personal influence of Althorp in the House of Commons was considered as a main basis of the administration when, in July last, he (Melbourne) undertook

the management of affairs, he considered it his duty, now that Althorp was removed from the Lower House, to ask the King whether it was His Majesty's wish that he (Melbourne) should propose to him fresh arrangements, or whether His Majesty preferred asking advice from other persons. He said that he would never abandon the service of his Sovereign as long as it was thought that he could be useful; that he felt confident that we should still have the support of the House of Commons; and that he was prepared to submit to the King arrangements suited to the occasion.

'He had a long conversation with the King on Thursday before dinner, and again on Friday morning before he left Brighton. The result of the whole was, that the King objected to the proposed arrangements for supplying the place of Althorp, and declared in writing his conviction that, by Althorp's removal from the Lower House, the Government had lost so much of consideration both in the House of Commons and in the country, that it was no longer adequate to the conduct of the affairs of the nation; for that we had no means for supplying by support in the Lords, the want of support in the Commons; and for these reasons, the King added, it was his determination not to continue Melbourne and his colleagues

in the management of affairs, and he stated verbally that he should send for the Duke of Wellington. Melbourne returned to town yesterday evening, and I presume that to-day the Duke of Wellington is at Brighton.

'The Government, therefore, have not resigned, but are dismissed; and they are dismissed not in consequence of having proposed any measure of which the King disapproved, and which they nevertheless would not give up, but because it is thought they are not strong enough in the Commons to carry on the business of the country, and their places are to be filled by men who are notoriously weak and unpopular in the Lower House, however strong they may be in the Upper one.

'It is impossible not to conclude that this is a preconcerted measure, and therefore it may be taken for granted that the Duke of Wellington is prepared at once to undertake the task of forming a Government. Peel is abroad, but it is not likely that he should have gone, without a previous understanding, one way or the other, with the Duke, as to what he would do, if such a crisis were to arise.

'I lament this event, because I can see nothing but mischief arising out of it; and all merely to gratify the ambition of the Duke of Welling-

ton, and the prejudices or sordid feelings of his followers. Either Parliament will be dissolved or it will not. If not, the Opposition will be most virulent and powerful, and the Government will soon be beaten; and, in the meantime, Whigs and Radicals will be jumbled together, and the former will be led on by party passion to identify themselves too much with the latter. Besides, a dissolution will be always considered as hanging over our heads, and men will be making violent speeches and giving extravagant pledges to curry favour with their constituents with a view to the next election. If, on the other hand, an immediate dissolution takes place, there will be no limit to the fury of opposite factions. The Tories may win fifty or sixty votes, which will still leave them in a minority; and the majority will consist of men who have pledged themselves on the hustings, chin-deep, for triennial Parliaments, ballot, and universal suffrage; and a fine state we shall then be in, with a House of Commons that will follow no Ministers who will not propose measures of this extravagant kind.

'As to foreign affairs, luckily most of the questions which have so long been pending are nearly settled. Portugal is safe; Spain is beyond the reach of Carlos, even helped by the Duke; and Greece has got its

frontier and a king. Belgium, too, thanks to the energy and wisdom of the King, is become the most flourishing State in Europe, but the Duke may try to cripple it by the Scheldt arrangements, and may promise the Dutch high duties as an inducement to them to sign a treaty. Will France, in that case, be stout, and stand out in favour of Belgium? Not, certainly, if Talleyrand has anything to say in the matter; for he is all for Holland, and hates and detests the independence of Belgium, and would cripple it by every means in his power, till he reduced it to be as unable to stand as he is himself.'

CHAPTER XIV.

MEMOIR OF KING WILLIAM IV. ON HIS LINE OF POLICY.

1830–1834.

Introduction—The Memorandum—Wellington's Ministry to November 1830—Grey's Ministry, and the Reform Bill—Why the King did not dismiss the Ministry in April 1831, but rather sanctioned the dissolution of Parliament—The Crisis of May 1831—The creation of new peers allowed by the King—Appeal of the King to the Upper House—His letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury—Mr. Stanley, the Duke of Richmond, and Mr. Graham resigned May 1834—Resignation of Lord Grey, July 1834—Exertions of the King in order to produce a fusion of parties—Conservatism of the King—Change of Ministry, November 1834—The foreign policy of the King (France, Austria, Portugal, Spain, Russia, and the Oriental Question).

KING WILLIAM IV., born 1765, succeeded to the English throne on June 26, 1830, at the age of sixty-five. Of a kindly, good-natured disposition and lively temperament, he was in no way distinguished either in character or intelligence. He owed his want of success as a politician, no less to his good qualities, than to the defects of his character. His powers of mind were not great enough to enable him to understand and weigh complicated questions; he was incapable, from the weakness of his character, of any determined resolution; his easy good nature made

him peculiarly accessible to the suggestions of those around him, as his wife and the Fitzclarences (his children by Mrs. Jordan), whilst his excitable temperament led him into all sorts of imprudent and compromising outbreaks and outpourings. Yet he believed himself to be a great politician; from time to time he showed a desire to interfere in public affairs—a desire which those ladies and the High Tory party with which they were connected, understood how to manage and turn to their own account. The letter of Lord Palmerston given in the last chapter has made us acquainted with one of these fancies of the King, arising from the characteristics above mentioned, viz. the dismissal of the Melbourne Ministry in November 1834. The Wellington and Peel Ministry, constructed with the greatest difficulty, dragged on a miserable existence until the following April. In January 1835 King William felt himself moved to hand over to his Minister, Sir Robert Peel, a complete statement in writing not only of his proceedings in the last crisis, but of his whole home and foreign policy since his accession! (of his general proceedings, as he comprehensively expressed it). This document Sir Robert Peel showed at the time, as it seems, only to the Duke of Wellington; it is hardly known in England, and has never been published. We give it

here with the necessary explanations and remarks. If King William's views were not in themselves remarkable, still his memoir is of value from the facts it contains, and the insight it gives into the machinery of a constitutional government. King William's style abounds to overflowing in what is called in England Parliamentary circumlocution, in which, instead of direct simple expressions, bombastic paraphrases are always chosen, which become in the end intolerably prolix and dull, and are enough to drive a foreigner to despair. The whole document is disfigured by such mere verbiage and wearisome repetitions.

A Statement of His Majesty's General Proceedings, and of the Principles by which he was guided from the period of his Accession, 1830, *to that of the recent Change in the Administration, January* 14, 1835.

As it is impossible that the circumstances attending the recent change of administration should not lead to discussion in both Houses of Parliament, in which reference would unavoidably be made to the course pursued by the King at periods when he was placed under the necessity of taking council more or less of himself, and of trusting his own judgment with respect to the decisions it became his duty to adopt, His Majesty thinks it may be useful to Sir Robert Peel

and his colleagues to receive from himself a statement of his general proceedings, and of the principles by which he was guided, and that this statement should embrace the prominent features of those proceedings from the period of His Majesty's accession, in June 1830, to that of the recent change in the administration, the circumstances connected with the last event being alone given in any detail.

Upon the King's accession His Majesty, without any hesitation, determined to maintain in the administration of the affairs of the country those who had been the confidential servants of his late brother, those whose political principles and measures had continued to be, as far as a necessary and well-judged deference to public feeling, and to the important object of maintaining the peace of the country would allow, such as had been approved by his late father.

To the Government so constituted the King gave his full and undeviating support, and during the short period of its further existence nothing was done, or required by His Majesty, which could produce difficulty or embarrassment to it.

In November of that year (1830) Sir Henry Parnell brought forward a motion,[1] which was resisted by the

[1] Sir H. Parnell's motion was to refer the estimates of the expense of the Civil List to a Select Committee.

Government as being an attack on the prerogative of the Crown, but which nevertheless received the support of a considerable number of Members of the House of Commons, who had become hostile to the Government in consequence of its concessions to the Roman Catholics, and who were distinguished by the appellation of ultra-Tories. The result of this junction with the Opposition, and of the majority thus obtained by the latter in the House of Commons upon so important a question, was the immediate resignation of the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues, and the unanimous opinion that His Majesty had no other alternative than to resort to the opposite party for the means of forming an administration ; to which was added the advice of his Lord Chancellor that he should address himself at once to Earl Grey. In concurrence with this advice His Majesty sent for Lord Grey, who agreed to take upon himself the trust proposed to him, upon a clear understanding that he should be at liberty to introduce at once the measure so long contemplated and advocated by him and his party of an extensive reform of Parliament, and that in the prosecution of his plan, to effect it, he should receive the King's countenance and support. This condition had been anticipated by His Majesty and by his late advisers, and no objection could be

made by him to the introduction of a measure to which Earl Grey had pledged his character and political consistency.

Earl Grey and his colleagues lost no time in preparing the Bills for the reform in the representation in the United Kingdom, and His Majesty sanctioned the introduction of them to Parliament, after some correspondence, into the character of which it is unnecessary that he should enter, as it was placed in the hands of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst in May 1832. After some discussion the House of Commons passed the proposed Bill by a majority of eight only,[1] and His Majesty was, in consequence, advised by Earl Grey and his other confidential servants to dissolve Parliament.

The King is aware that it has been remarked that he had inconsiderately and improperly neglected the opportunity which was afforded him at this period of *emancipating* himself from the thraldom of a party which had introduced, and was pursuing, measures of excessive and dangerous reform by refusing to dissolve the Parliament; and he does not deny that such a refusal would have been equivalent to the dismissal of

[1] There is some error of memory here on the part of the King. On April 19, 1831, on the Reform Bill, the Ministry were in a *minority* of eight. Hansard, vol. iii. 1688.

Earl Grey and his colleagues from his Council. But supposing that this course could then have been adopted with due regard to the peace and the tranquillity of the country, in which the cry of reform had been so generally and so extensively raised, His Majesty was then satisfied, as he now continues to be, that he could not have adopted it without seriously compromising his own character as a sovereign and a gentleman, inasmuch as it would have exposed him to the just imputation that, although he had, in the moment of difficulty, appealed to Lord Grey for his aid and services, and although these had been given upon the understanding that His Majesty would admit the introduction and support him in the prosecution of a great public measure to which his character was pledged, His Majesty had not scrupled to desert and sacrifice him at the hour of trial, when the moment arrived which should offer the proof whether the compact had been made on the part of His Majesty with the honest intention of observing it. It is very possible that by the dismissal of his Ministers at that period, and the consequent exclusion of the Reform Bill, as it had been introduced, measures less objectionable might have been proposed; but His Majesty very much doubts whether the country was then in a temper which would have enabled the

administration succeeding that of Lord Grey to maintain its ground long enough, to give effect to any great measure, and whether any other course than that which His Majesty pursued would not have led to changes of administration rapidly succeeding each other, and to the destruction in every quarter of that confidence in the fair and honourable dealings of the Sovereign which, in His Majesty's opinion, does and ought to constitute the best safeguard of the monarchy.

Therefore, whether right or wrong in policy, His Majesty's decision was made upon a principle which he feels to have been correct; and such being his feeling, he could not, if he had not acted upon it, have relied with the same confidence on the aid and support of others whenever he might have occasion to resort to them.

To proceed, the discussion on the Reform Bill was resumed in the new Parliament, and prosecuted in a manner and under circumstances to which it would be foreign to the object of this paper to revert, until the apprehension of a defeat in the House of Lords induced Lord Grey, at the earnest solicitation of *some* of his colleagues, and ultimately with their *unanimous* consent, to submit to the King that an addition should be made to the peerage; to which, as at first

limited, His Majesty agreed, after considerable hesitation and objection. But, to obviate so odious an expedient, as well as the risk of a collision between the two Houses, which was equally the subject of serious apprehension, communications were admitted and encouraged by His Majesty with a view to some compromise, and to such modifications of certain clauses as should render the Bill more palatable to the majority of its opponents in the House of Lords.

These failed, and the failure having had the effect of increasing the violence of the Opposition, rather than allaying it, Lord Grey and his colleagues brought forward a proposition for an increase of the peerage which appeared to His Majesty so unreasonably extensive, so injurious to the character of that branch of the Legislature, and so degrading in its effects to the aristocracy of the country, that he refused to acquiesce in it.

The result of this decision was, as might be expected, the resignation of Lord Grey and his colleagues in May 1832; and His Majesty sent for Lord Lyndhurst, who had been his High Chancellor, and requested him to communicate with the Duke of Wellington and others who might be disposed to come to his assistance and to attempt to form an administration.

The appeal was nobly met by his Grace; but, after some ineffectual attempts to accomplish the purpose, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst stated to His Majesty that their endeavours had become hopeless, and advised His Majesty to resort again to Earl Grey, and to make the best terms he could with him with respect to the peerage question, if his Lordship should consent to return to the direction of his Councils.

Fortunately, the interval had been short; nothing had occurred to occasion angry feeling; His Majesty experienced no difficulty in prevailing upon Lord Grey to resume the administration, and he is bound to do that nobleman the justice to say that neither then, nor at any subsequent period, did he show the least disposition to take advantage of the position in which His Majesty had placed himself towards him and his party, by the unsuccessful attempt to change the Government and to defeat the measure for which they had contended.

But the natural and unavoidable result of this return to Lord Grey was the abandonment of His Majesty's objections to the increase of the peerage, provided it could not be obviated by prevailing upon the opponents of the Reform Bill to drop their opposition to it, and, sensible as His Majesty had become

of any attempt to obtain sufficient or efficient support in the opposite party; apprehensive as he was of a collision between the two Houses, if the Lords should persist in the opposition; and anxious as he had ever been to prevent what he viewed as the degradation of that body, His Majesty did take some steps[1] towards inducing them to abandon their opposition, which had the desired effect; although many, who did not fairly estimate the difficulties of his situation, questioned the propriety of His Majesty's proceedings on this occasion.[2]

The King is aware that another step, taken by him at a subsequent period, became the subject of animad-

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[1] The King caused his private secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, to address the following circular letter to a number of Tory peers :—

'St. James's Palace, May 17, 1832.

'My dear Lord,—I am honoured with His Majesty's commands to acquaint your lordship that all difficulties to the arrangement in progress will be obviated by a declaration in the House to-night from a sufficient number of peers, that, in consequence of the present state of affairs, they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it may pass without delay and as nearly as possible in its present shape.

'I have the honour, &c.

'HERBERT TAYLOR.'

This letter had the effect of inducing about 100 Opposition peers to absent themselves during the remaining discussions.

[2] Cf. May, 'Const. Hist.,' vol. i. pp. 119, 120.

versions. He alludes to the letter which he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in deprecation of the course pursued by the ecclesiastical members of the House of Lords; and with a view to prevail upon them to abstain from taking so prominent and so warm a part in general discussion as might increase the disinclination and the prejudice, which had been already excited and magnified against them.

The King does not deny that, in endeavouring to moderate the inconsiderate zeal of some of the high dignitaries of the Church, he sought to extricate himself and his government from difficulty; but he is justified in taking credit to himself also for an anxious desire to screen those respectable individuals from the increasing effect of hostile feelings and the popular clamour of which they were becoming the objects, at a period when the established Church was threatened with encroachment and when it appeared to him desirable to conciliate, as well as to resist.

The King will pass on to the period of the secession in May last[1] of Mr. Stanley, the Duke of Richmond,

[1] On May 27, 1834, Mr. Ward, in the House of Commons, proposed a resolution in favour of the reduction of the temporalities of the Established Church in Ireland. This led to the secession of the four ministers named in the text. Hansard, vol. xxiii. p. 1396.

Lord Ripon, and Sir James Graham from the government, whereby its efficiency and consistency were so much shaken that Lord Grey would readily have resigned his situation; and if His Majesty had wished to avail himself of that opportunity of dissolving the administration, he might have taken advantage of the opening afforded him by his Lordship. But, after the failure on a former occasion, His Majesty naturally felt the necessity of extreme caution in all his proceedings; he felt also that Lord Grey and some of his colleagues had established strong claims to his regard and confidence and gratitude, by the manner in which they had acted towards him at that period and since they had returned to his councils; and it was therefore with perfect sincerity that he urged Lord Grey to retain his situation and to endeavour to make an arrangement for supplying the vacancies which had arisen.

Events succeeded which produced the resignation of Earl Grey,[1] and as these are before the public and His Majesty had no concern whatever in producing them, and could not have prevented them, we need not dwell upon them.

It occurred to him that advantage might be taken

[1] In July 1834.

of this state of affairs to effect an union of parties, of which the object should be Conservative, and this became the subject of communications to Lord Melbourne and through him to the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Mr. Stanley.[1]

The result proved that His Majesty was mistaken in his expectations, and it disappointed hopes which he had long cherished. He was aware that impressions prevailed in some quarters that this opportunity might have been taken of effecting a change in his Councils, but he could not satisfy himself that this could be then attempted with such a prospect of success as would justify the risk and secure him against the consequences of a failure; and, after fully weighing every contingency, he determined to entrust to Viscount Melbourne, whom he had employed in the communications, the reconstruction of the administration.

As the whole correspondence which passed on this

[1] The correspondence relating to this fusion of the Whigs and Tories, so much desired by the King, is printed in Peel's 'Memoirs,' vol. ii. pp. 1–13. There is, among Stockmar's papers, another unpublished memoir of the King's on the same subject, of the date of the second Melbourne administration (April 2, 1835-41), which proves how confirmed the King was in his views, then obviously premature, though now so generally accepted. We do not give this document, as it contains nothing but what is already printed in Peel's 'Memoirs.'

occasion (in July last) is in the hands of Sir Robert Peel, it is quite unnecessary that His Majesty should enter into any particulars. But he cannot help calling the attention of Sir Robert Peel, and that of those of his colleagues to whom he may communicate this paper, to the candid manner in which he exposed to Lord Melbourne, in his memorandum of last July, the grounds upon which he adopted the alternative and stated his predilection for Conservative measures, and for those who advocated them, and endeavoured to guard himself against further encroachments, and against the introduction to his council of individuals on whose principles he could not rely as he could on those of Lord Melbourne and some of his tried colleagues.

Sir Robert Peel will find in these documents, and in another letter of subsequent date, proofs of His Majesty's consistency of feeling and purpose with respect to the maintenance of the Established Church and of the old institutions of the country. He will observe how strenuously His Majesty contended that when he signed the commission of inquiry into the state of the Church of Ireland,[1] he had pledged him-

[1] In order to evade the motion of Mr. Ward, already mentioned, relative to the reduction of the endowment of the Irish Established Church, Government resolved upon naming a

self to nothing in anticipation of its results; and, if it were necessary, he could prove by reference to his correspondence during the last four years that he has studiously watched and scrutinized all that has ever been brought forward or suggested, that could be considered in any degree assailing or endangering those valuable objects, as affecting the constitutional rights of the Crown or those of the aristocracy.

It was natural that His Majesty's earnest and vigilant attention should be given to all this, during the progress of measures emanating from a government deemed *popular*; and he cannot charge himself with having neglected so essential a part of his duty nor with having hesitated to remonstrate and to object, as far as the circumstances in which he was placed would admit.

He owes this justice to himself, but he is bound to do Earl Grey and Viscount Melbourne and some of their colleagues the justice to say, that he ever found in them a disposition to meet and support his Majesty in these views; and, although they have erred in introducing too extensive a measure of reform, he verily believes them to have become, in the progress of their ministerial duties, sensible of this error and earnestly

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Special Commission of Inquiry into the state of the Church of Ireland, to be composed of laymen. Hansard, vol. xxiv. p. 13.

desirous of checking those who persisted in a course, of which they had not equally discovered the destructive tendency.

Nothing material occurred, until His Majesty received from Lord Melbourne an account of the critical state of the late Earl Spencer.

The correspondence which ensued, until November 14 inclusive, is also in the hands of Sir Robert Peel, and will show Lord Melbourne's *immediate* apprehension of the difficulty and embarrassment under which the Government would be placed by the death of Earl Spencer, and the removal of Lord Althorp [1] to the House of Lords, as well as His Majesty's concurrence in the feeling so strongly expressed.

The King's first conclusion was that Lord Melbourne (who had as well as Lord Grey, attached, after the secession of Mr. Stanley, a paramount importance to Lord Althorp's services in the House of Commons) would resign, whenever the contemplated event should take place; but in the next letter, as far as His Majesty recollects (for he has not reserved any copies), Lord Melbourne stated a hope that Lord Althorp might be prevailed upon to continue in the administration, although a member of the House of Lords,

[1] Earl Spencer's son, who now became Earl Spencer.

and His Majesty's answer did not give any opinion that this would facilitate the arrangement to be made. In fact, His Majesty did not contemplate the possibility of Lord Melbourne's submitting any that would prove satisfactory; and, when he intimated his intention of coming to Brighton, His Majesty had persuaded himself that he was coming to tender his resignation, and had made up his mind to accept it.

Lord Melbourne came to the King on November 13, and the conversation between them was free, unreserved, and dispassionate. The only arrangement which his Lordship brought forward, as he stated, with the concurrent opinion and advice of all his colleagues and those most competent to suggest any opinion with respect to the feelings of the House of Commons, was that Lord John Russell should succeed Lord Althorp as leader. His Majesty objected strongly to Lord John Russell; he stated, without reserve, his opinion that he had not the abilities nor the influence which qualified him for the task, and observed that he would make a wretched figure when opposed by Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Stanley.

Lord Melbourne thought the King laid more stress than was justifiable upon the necessity of being a good speaker, or ready debater; these being advantages which Lord Althorp did not possess, while he exercised

an extraordinary influence in the House of Commons. He did not mean to say that Lord John Russell or any other member of the Government could in this respect effectually replace Lord Althorp, but he did not allow that there was any reason to apprehend that the business of the government might not be carried on satisfactorily.

The King objected equally, if not more, to Mr. Abercrombie,[1] whose name appeared to have been also suggested to Lord Melbourne, as had Sir John Hobhouse's, and Lord Melbourne did not seem to think either eligible, any more than Mr. Spring Rice, whose name His Majesty stated he expected to have been proposed to him.

Lord Melbourne therefore persisted in urging preferably the nomination of Lord John Russell. But, His Majesty had further objections. He considered Lord John Russell to have pledged himself to certain encroachments upon the Church, which His Majesty had made up his mind and expressed his determination to resist (and Lord Melbourne could not deny that he had done so, as had others of his colleagues, especially as to the results of the commission of inquiry

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[1] Mr. Abercrombie was afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons. He was created Lord Dunfermline in 1839.

into the state of the Irish Church) ; and His Majesty did not disguise his apprehension that, whenever that question should be brought forward, his opposition to the measure which might be suggested would produce a serious difference between him and his government ; nor that this apprehension had been increased by communications from Lord Duncannon, who, before he went to Ireland and on his return, had, at two audiences, suggested the propriety of suspending the *non-cure* parishes[1] and had increased His Majesty's alarm with respect to the projected encroachment and constitution of the Established Church.

Nor did His Majesty conceal from Lord Melbourne that the injudicious and extravagant conduct of Lord Brougham had tended to shake his confidence in the course which might be pursued by the administration, of which he formed so prominent and so active a feature, and in its consistency.

Lord Melbourne did not appear surprised that the King should have a strong feeling with respect to the measures which might be proposed, as arising out of the pledges of Lord John Russell and some of his colleagues ; but observed that, with respect to those measures, or the results of the commission of inquiry,

[1] There were, in Ireland, benefices without any cure of souls.

His Majesty had not pledged himself, and therefore would be at full liberty to refuse his assent to any measure submitted to him. He added that he (Lord Melbourne) had not pledged or committed himself. His Lordship admitted indeed that one or two of his colleagues had a strong feeling upon the Church question, which might induce them to go to the full length of His Majesty's objection ; and His Majesty thinks that he named Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Spring Rice, and that he stated that the introduction of the measures supposed to be contemplated by Lord John Russell and some of his colleagues would probably occasion their resignation. But His Majesty may very possibly have misunderstood him : be this as it may, Lord Lansdowne had very distinctly stated to the King, at the period of the secession of Mr. Stanley and of those who retired with him, that he concurred most decidedly in their feelings on the Church question ; and that the earnest solicitation of Lord Grey and his declaration that he would resign if Lord Lansdowne withdrew himself, had alone induced him to continue a member of the administration.

But Lord Melbourne did not upon this occasion state, nor had he at any former period stated to the King, that differences of opinion prevailed in the Cabinet which might produce its dissolution before

the meeting of Parliament, or when measures might be proposed upon which they should not agree; nor did he express any doubt of his ability to carry on the government, with the aid of those who had been admitted or might be admitted to His Majesty's councils.

It was observed to Lord Melbourne that His Majesty had always been told by Lord Grey that the removal of Lord Althorp from the House of Commons after the loss of Mr. Stanley would be, of itself, a sufficient reason for breaking up his administration; and that Lord Melbourne had laid the same stress upon the retention of Lord Althorp's services in the House of Commons, when he succeeded Lord Grey. The opinion of the supporters of the government to the same effect had been unequivocally manifested by their address to Lord Althorp. His Majesty, therefore, was not prepared for the removal of those difficulties; and the impression on his mind, produced partly by these previous circumstances and partly by his own view of the resources of the Government in the House of Commons, was, that they could not carry on the business satisfactorily; and, at any rate, that to carry it on they must count and depend upon the support of those whose views, especially with respect to the Church, were at variance with the

King's, and must eventually, and probably soon after Parliament met, lead to a serious difference.

That His Majesty had the highest confidence in Lord Melbourne and in some of his colleagues, and that he believed them to be *conservative* in principle and purpose—opposed to the designs which he deprecated; but that he had not the same confidence in others of his colleagues—he dreaded their principles; and under these circumstances he could not but apprehend putting off the evil day, especially as he felt that any accession of strength must be sought in the ranks of those who would urge and advocate *extreme* measures, and would therefore hasten rather than avert the crisis.

The question was not brought to issue on the 13th, and it was agreed that His Majesty should give his full consideration to what Lord Melbourne had submitted and should see him again on the following morning.

The King was sensible of the frank and unreserved manner in which Lord Melbourne had discussed the whole subject, and had replied to the various questions he had put to him; but his lordship had failed in convincing him that any arrangement could be made which would enable him to carry on the government satisfactorily, or which could prevent the early disso-

lution of the administration, at a period more inconvenient than the present and more pregnant with exciting causes.

Under these circumstances, and considering also that if he delayed coming to a decision the opportunity of dissolving the Parliament during its prorogation (if it should be deemed advisable) would be lost, His Majesty at once made up his mind to communicate to Lord Melbourne on the following morning his regret that circumstances did not, in his opinion, justify his sanctioning the arrangement he had proposed, or the continued existence of an administration so situated; and this intimation was reduced to writing to prevent any misconception, and in order that His Majesty might relieve himself from the embarrassment of the verbal opening of a painful communication.

The King saw Lord Melbourne again on the following morning (November 14) and gave him the note, which it is unnecessary to transcribe here as Sir Robert Peel possesses a copy of it.

Lord Melbourne, in the handsomest manner, and from feelings of devotion and attachment to which His Majesty is anxious to do the fullest justice, suggested a partial alteration, which, without changing the general sense, divested this communication of all

that could give offence to any individual; and it will appear, that the declared and ostensible ground of His Majesty's decision was his conviction that the general weight and consideration of the Government had been so much diminished in the House of Commons and with the country at large, as to render it impossible that they should continue to conduct the public affairs with advantage.

His Majesty was then satisfied, and upon careful review of all that had passed he continues satisfied, that the ground thus assigned, doubtless also that which had a principal share in influencing his decision, was borne out by all the contingencies of the case, and was not only justifiable but such as imposed upon him the obligation of adopting a resolution, which he admits not to have been free from the apprehension of risk and difficulty.

The King knows that it is, or has been, the opinion of some, that he has acted prematurely, and that, if he had agreed to the arrangement proposed by Lord Melbourne, the Administration would have fallen to pieces and dissolved itself soon after the opening of Parliament. But His Majesty could not have sanctioned the nomination of Lord John Russell to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, without bringing into question the sincerity of his declaration

that he would resist the encroachments, to the prosecution of which that individual had pledged himself; nor without exposing himself to the imputation of having misled him and his colleagues, as well as the country, by appearing to have conceded the point when he persisted in his determination to contest it, with the obvious view to the event which Lord Melbourne wished to avert.

His Majesty might possibly have brought Lord Melbourne and his colleagues into greater difficulty, by subjecting the appointment of Lord John Russell to a declaration of his views and intentions, to which the unanimous assent of his colleagues should be attached; or he might have made his disapprobation of the course pursued by Lord Brougham the chief ground of his objection, and have required from Lord Melbourne that he should be removed from his councils. But His Majesty had no desire to place Lord Melbourne in difficulty, or to embarrass him by the nature of his proceedings. He preferred to meet him on the frank and honest terms on which his lordship had ever shown his disposition to deal with His Majesty; and he is satisfied that he has adopted on this occasion the plain and simple course which becomes him, and which best entitles him to the confidence of his subjects in general, and now particularly

to the confidence of those[1] who have so handsomely and kindly met his recent appeal to their valuable support and services. He flatters himself that he has established another, not immaterial claim, to their confidence in the absence of all attempt, during every period of the preceding Administrations, at communications with them, direct or indirect, which could afford the slightest cause of jealousy or suspicion to those who formed those Administrations, notwithstanding the serious difficulty and doubt in which His Majesty was at times placed; and his present Ministers are well aware that this reserve was maintained to the very last moment, and that when he came to the final determination, on November 14, there had been no communication *of any sort* from which he could learn their sentiments, or their means of relieving him from the difficulty in which he had felt it his duty to place himself.

The King does not, indeed, deny that, while taking this step he entertained sanguine expectations, amounting almost to conviction, that he would find in those of a kindred feeling, the aid and support which he felt to be so essential and important towards enabling him to *hold his own*, to uphold the ancient and sacred insti-

[1] The Tories.

tutions of the country; and experience the co-operation and support of those who had shown and declared that they felt, as His Majesty did. that it had become imperiously necessary to endeavour to stem the torrent of encroachment, and to prevent useful and judicious reforms from being converted into engines of destruction.

But it must be obvious from all that has passed, and from His Majesty's statement of it, that the decision to which he came and the judgment which produced it were caused more by the circumstances under his *immediate* consideration, and by the dread of danger and embarrassment which might result from indecision and delay, than by any calculation of the nature and extent of the support he might obtain; and therefore that they could not be biased, either by the unreasonable expectation of unquestionable success, or by dread of ultimate failure and disappointment.

His Majesty did not, in taking his resolution, place out of view the possibility of an arduous struggle, nor did he commit himself without having made up his mind firmly to persevere in a course, adopted on what he considers firm principle, and suggested by a deep sense of sacred and moral obligations. His Majesty trusts that, with the help of God, he shall be able

steadily to pursue that course to a successful issue, without endangering the existence of the monarchy or the peace of the country.

The King feels that he ought not to close this communication without adverting briefly to the chief features of the foreign policy of his late Government, which received in general his approbation; the main principle of it having been the maintenance of the peace of Europe, so essential to the prosperity of every State and more particularly to that of this country. The accession of Lord Grey and his colleagues to office had been immediately preceded by revolutions in France and Belgium, to the pernicious influence of which may be in a great measure ascribed the excitement and the increased spirit of agitation in this country. . . .

The change of Government in France, &c. (Here follows the passage already given in the 11th Chapter, on the Belgian Question). The memoir then continues thus:

Although the King was desirous of continuing upon good terms with France, and therefore never objected to any measure of conciliation; and although he believes that the apparent union of policy between this country and France tended to the preservation of general peace, he never trusted France, nor placed

any confidence in the assurances and professions of Louis Philippe and his Government. The uncertain situation in which they occasionally found themselves, the apprehension of fresh revolutions, and the dread of war, which might bring into action a spirit of agitation, the effect of which might recoil on themselves, all contributed to produce the leaning to a connection with England, which they would readily drop whenever they should be satisfied that it had ceased to serve their purpose.

In the review of the policy observed with respect to France there is one point which His Majesty cannot pass without notice, namely, his earnest and unceasing endeavours to prevail upon his Government, and more especially upon the individual entrusted with the administration of its Foreign Affairs, to check the disposition which had been shown by the French Government to tolerate, if not to countenance and encourage, a system of propagandism tending to disturb and agitate the neighbouring States; and His Majesty cannot say that he was satisfied with the attention given to this point, and with the inclination shown by the French Government to drop so mischievous a system. The course of events has, however, produced the result to which His Majesty's remonstrances had been unavailingly directed—Louis

Philippe having discovered that his own security is deeply concerned in checking the general progress of the mischief.

His Majesty has at all times felt solicitous to maintain the most friendly relations with Austria and Prussia, and, taking all circumstances into consideration, he is bound to give credit to the late Administration for its inclination to pursue a course which should be in accordance with His Majesty's wishes. He is sensible, indeed, that too great a disposition was manifested on some occasions to interfere in the internal arrangements and regulations of other States; and this disposition may possibly be attributed to a predilection for Liberal institutions and constitutional innovations, which it might be considered advisable or necessary to manifest in deference to popular opinion and support.

This remark applies more particularly to interferences with respect to the internal affairs of the German Confederation, which was more than once the subject of objection on the part of His Majesty; but, in saying this, he is bound to add that he concurred with his Government in considering that, as a party to the Treaty of Vienna of 1815, and a guarantee of its stipulation with respect to the general establishment and constitution of the German Con-

federacy, England had a right to participation in the discussion of certain general questions from which Austria and Prussia sought to exclude her.

In all that related to the affairs of the Italian States, and of Switzerland, His Majesty considers his late Government to have acted with great prudence and caution; and he is sensible that there have been periods, when any departure from that course might have brought very inflammable matter to an explosion.

With respect to the contest in Portugal, of which the issue was so long doubtful, His Majesty does not deny that he concurred decidedly with his Government in the policy and propriety of supporting the cause of its present Queen; not indeed from any predilection for her late father, Don Pedro, or from any desire to encourage the introduction of a constitutional form of Government, which he was sensible that the great mass of the Portuguese nation rejected, but because he considered the continued sovereignty of Don Miguel the greatest evil of the two, and that which threatened the greatest mischief to British interests. The result of this contest, and the prospects which are now opened, will, His Majesty trusts, realise his hopes that peace and prosperity may gradually be restored to that long distracted and im-

poverished country ; and that the re-establishment of a predominant British influence may tend to its future advantage and security.

The King has uniformly approved of the policy adopted by his late Government with regard to the affairs of Spain, and, above all, of its abstaining from intervention, and of its using its influence with France towards producing a similar line of conduct. But His Majesty does not think that sufficient attention has been paid to his *early* suggestion, that the Spanish Government should be urged and advised to endeavour to conciliate the provinces which are the seat of a destructive and murderous civil war, by offering to confirm to them their ancient rights and privileges, the attachment to which His Majesty believes to influence them in a much greater degree than does affection for the cause or person of Don Carlos.

It remains only for the King to notice the conduct which has been pursued with respect to Russia, and there is no branch of the foreign policy of this country which he has watched with greater solicitude, none which in its results has given him less satisfaction, especially as far as it embraces the affairs of the Levant.

The Porte had been so much crippled in her naval

resources by the unfortunate combination against her of England, France, and Russia, and by the 'untoward' action of Navarino, and subsequently in a more general sense, by the war with Russia, which was terminated by the peace of Adrianople; both had entailed such a sacrifice of territory and loss of revenue, as to have left the Sultan in a state ill calculated to cope with his rebellious subjects in various quarters; and more especially with the Pasha of Egypt, who had been preparing to take extensive advantage of the situation to which his sovereign might be reduced.

These circumstances, added to the disordered state of Greece, and the occupation of Algiers and other points on the coast of Barbary, by the French, had induced the King repeatedly to press upon his Government the importance of strengthening materially the naval force in the Mediterranean, and in the Archipelago; and he urged this yet more earnestly when he learnt the rapid strides of Mehemet Ali, and the alarm they had excited at Constantinople. This was done some time previously to the first mission of Namic, Pasha to England; and there is every reason to presume that the presence of four or five sail of the line in the Mediterranean at that period, and their appearance off Alexandria, would have effectually

checked the designs and the progress of Mehemet Ali, and relieved the Sultan from the necessity of making a very unwilling appeal to the dangerous protection of his powerful and ambitious neighbour.

His Majesty believes those composing his Government to have been more or less alive to the importance of being prepared in due time for the course and the possible event of the contest between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, and willing to act upon His Majesty's suggestion; but withheld by the apprehension of not experiencing, with a view to any foreign object, that support from the House of Commons which would insure the necessary supplies, and by the fear of bringing forward any measure which might deprive them of the good will of those who were continually urging economy and reductions, to the exclusion of all other considerations.

Thus the opportune moment of preserving or of recovering our long established influence in the councils of the Porte was lost, and it was transferred to a Power which, after having so materially contributed to lower the resources of the Porte, was watching for any and every opportunity of turning her exhausted state to its own advantage.

The progress of Mehemet Ali was arrested, and although the interposition of England and France was

not without effect upon this occasion, as acknowledged by Mehemet Ali, the actual pressure of a Russian fleet and army obtained at Constantinople, as might be expected, the whole credit for this event. Russia did not neglect to avail herself of the influence thus acquired; and one of the first fruits of her protectorship was the conclusion of the Treaty of the 8th July 1833,[1] obviously extorted with a view to secure to herself advantages of navigation from which other Powers should be excluded.

Against this treaty England and France protested, they declared that they should consider the treaty as 'non avenu.' The Cabinet of St. Petersburg replied that it should consider the protest 'non avenu,' and afterwards assumed that the question had then been brought to a satisfactory close.

France, which was less interested in the question, appears to have dropped it, while England has through its Minister at Constantinople called for explanations, which, under the influence of Russia, have been evaded.

In the meantime a British squadron has been assembled and has for a considerable period main-

[1] The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, by a secret article of which the Porte promises, whenever Russia requires it, to close the Dardanelles to the men-of-war of all other nations.

tained, in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles, a station which may fairly be presumed to have produced a more conciliatory tone at St. Petersburg, and greater caution in its measures, though no abandonment of designs which may be carried on by safe means when the more open attack is felt to be exposed to direct opposition. The King dwelt upon these circumstances, as he is anxious to state to his present Government his conviction arising out of them, and often expressed to his late Government, that, notwithstanding all her professions of moderation and disinterestedness with regard to the Porte, Russia had never abandoned and will never lose sight of her ambitious projects in that quarter, and that, notwithstanding the veil which she endeavours to cast over her proceedings, they may be easily traced to be at variance with her professions. Of this a proof may be found in her recent opposition to the projected establishment of a steam communication with India, by the Euphrates, which, if it could be carried into effect without the contingent apprehension of interruption from the actual condition of the country which it must traverse, would doubtless tend to the essential benefit of *all* concerned in it.

Russia has indeed recently concurred with England and France in preventing the renewal of hostilities

between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali; and this might be construed into a desire to consult the welfare of the Porte, and to relieve herself from the necessity of again hastening to its protection, if there were not reason to suspect that she apprehended the pressure of a British squadron might prove as efficacious as the dreaded approach of a Russian army in checking the operations of Mehemet Ali, and that the merit of protecting the Sultan from insult might be transferred from herself to England.

His Majesty is indeed satisfied that the maintenance of an adequate British naval force in the Mediterranean will tend more than any apprehension of Russian interference to keep Mehemet Ali in check; and although he is persuaded that the Porte cannot recover the power while so great a portion of her territory and resources remain under the control and at the disposal of this ambitious vassal. His Majesty fears also that the result of this struggle between them would exhaust the resources of both, to the ultimate advantage of Russia, which on the other hand, *if left at liberty to take its own independent course*, would encourage such renewal of it in the hope of its affording a plea and opportunity of again interfering, and for a more permanent occupation of Constantinople.

If these remarks be well grounded, the King conceives that he is justified in attaching so much importance to the continuance of the squadron in the Mediterranean, as offering the best security against the further encroachments of Mehemet Ali and against the eventual designs of Russia.

It is possible indeed that circumstances may arise which may favour the application of a British naval force to the emancipation of the Porte from the difficulty and embarrassment in which it is kept by the usurpation of Mehemet Ali; and His Majesty cannot but feel persuaded that whenever this can be accomplished by British intervention, it will be the most severe blow that Russian policy can receive.

(Signed) WILLIAM R.

Pavilion, Brighton: January 14, 1835.

CHAPTER XV.

I.

THE CAMP OF KALISCH, SEPTEMBER 1835.

The Camp of Kalisch, September 1835—Marriage of Donna Maria of Portugal with Prince Ferdinand of Coburg—Stockmar entrusted with the negotiations of the Marriage Contract—His care for the favourable preparation of the Prince for his new position—Intrigues against the marriage in favour of a French alliance—Letter of Lord Palmerston to Stockmar, December 18, 1835.

THE alliance of the so-called Northern Powers had proved itself singularly ineffective, more especially with regard to the revolution in France and the Belgian business. It owed its continued existence to the common interests, partly real, partly imaginary, the antecedents, the traditions, the personal ties, which united the sovereigns. As Russia had from the first taken the lead in this union, its real continuance, or the appearance of it, was considered important to the prestige of that country. With this view, as well as from a personal love of effective demonstrations, the indefatigable Emperor Nicholas, from about the

year 1830, arranged several interviews between the Sovereigns and their principal Ministers. It is true that the results of the Conferences of München-Grätz in the autumn of 1833, as we can see in d'Haussonville,[1] had not answered their intentions as against France. But in the year 1835, the Emperor thought it high time to get up, with the same view, another theatrical display, 'brilliantly appointed,' for the advantage of the world. This was the great camp and military manœuvres of Kalisch, where the Russian and Prussian monarchs met, with their respective troops. The King of Prussia, a man of simple tastes, took no great delight in Kalisch; but, at that time, unbounded deference was paid to Russia by Prussia, so the King of Prussia and his Princes left Silesia, where the Emperor of Russia had taken part in the Prussian manœuvres, and set out on September 11 for Kalisch, and assisted at the operations there until the 22nd. The newspapers of the day described the gorgeousness and brilliant colours of the Russian uniforms, the wealth of horses and carriages displayed by the Russian officers. 'Nearly all the Russian nobility,' we read in one report, 'had exerted themselves to take part worthily in this great military

[1] 'Histoire de la Politique extérieure,' vol. i. p. 40.

festivity. The town of Kalisch had never seen such grandeur. Money was scattered with open hands. It was impossible to see anything more beautiful than the camp. Not only was the locality chosen most favourable in itself, but everything had been arranged with rare skill. The view from the Belvedere, built for His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, was matchless; the whole horizon seemed a sea of white tents.

From amidst these rose in the silence of evening a symphony, executed by six hundred instruments, filling the soul of the listener with deep religious emotions. Rockets flew up into the dark but cloudless sky, and the stars which they scattered sank down slowly to the stars below. The report of a cannon gave the signal for prayer to 60,000 men. After the service, Russian national hymns were heard around the Belvedere, accompanied by various instruments.'

Austria had taken no part in the military drama of Kalisch. But it was necessary to show the world how thoroughly the three monarchs were united, and, for this purpose, after the camp of Kalisch, in the end of September, the Emperor Nicholas and King Frederick William joined the good Emperor Ferdinand at Töplitz, where their time was divided

between military manœuvres and political discussions. From Töplitz, the Emperor of all the Russias followed the Austrian ruler to Prague. On October 8, this Prince, who was one of those people that imagine they have done something if they have taken a great deal of exercise, left Prague in strictest incognito and travelled to Vienna as a courier, merely to surprise the Empress mother and pay his respects to her. 'The people,' said the Prussian 'Staats-zeitung,' 'were much touched by this act of courtesy, and the scene at the meeting of the two sovereigns was indescribably interesting.'

We give a letter of Stockmar with an account of these Kalisch and Töplitz interviews. His authority was one of the Princes present at Töplitz.

'I imagine the camp at Kalisch to have been like one of those Russian festivals, which used to take place during the reign of Catherine II. We live at a time when they no longer produce any effect. Prussia took part, not from any delight in it, but simply because, from policy and weak good nature combined, the King could not say no to his over-courteous ally and son-in-law.

'Old Wittgenstein exclaimed in his absence of mind, "Good heavens! how wearisome all this is. I am only sorry for the old gentleman, that we are making

ourselves so ridiculous: for with all our tricks we are not frightening anybody."

'The Russian army, about 56,000 strong, was splendidly equipped, but indifferently drilled, and the commissariat just sufficient to starve the men. Two colonels, whose regiments were the most starved, were sent to Siberia. Two generals, for very trifling mistakes during the evolutions, were cashiered on the spot. The adjutant of one of them, Nostitz,[1] was struck with paralysis on learning the fate of his general. The Emperor visited him on his sick bed, and presented him with 10,000 ducats. A wonderful man is this Emperor! He degrades ladies of the Court whom he finds in a room which their rank did not entitle them to enter, and kisses the hand of his father-in-law twenty times a day. It is a barbaric display which does not please or impress the west of Europe. All really liberal Prussians dislike the Russian alliance. I cannot believe that either at Kalisch or at Töplitz much political business, or anything new, was settled. Probably they renewed their engagements to hold firmly together in case of necessity, and, if war became inevitable, to fight bravely together.

[1] Karl von Nostitz, the former adjutant of Prince Louis Ferdinand, afterwards in the Russian service, known through the interesting 'Memoirs of his Life and Correspondence.'

However, the political watchword was, a friendly feeling for the people. "As long as it is any way possible, we must try to manage matters by clemency, justice, and upright dealing, and only have recourse to force in extreme danger." With regard to foreign nations, the same temperate policy was advocated. "We must not always interfere in the affairs of other people, not even in those of France, if she, without injury to foreign nations, wishes to set up a republic at home." The state of the Emperor of Austria's health became very generally known through the Töplitz festivities. Metternich gave his coat a little pull whenever it was necessary for him to walk, to stand, and to shake or nod his head.'

II.

THE MARRIAGE OF DONNA MARIA OF PORTUGAL WITH PRINCE FERDINAND OF COBURG, 1835–1836.

The Queen Donna Maria of Portugal (born April 4, 1819) had, on January 26, 1835, married the Duke of Leuchtenberg, born 1810, (the brother of her step-mother, the second wife of Don Pedro, Princess Amalia of Leuchtenberg,) but he died on March 28 following. The internal condition of Portugal made it highly desirable that the Queen should speedily

contract a second marriage. On April 9, 1836, therefore, she was united to the Roman Catholic Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, born 1816. He was the son of Prince Ferdinand, the younger brother of the reigning Duke, Ernest I., by his marriage with Antoinette, the wealthy daughter of the Prince of Cohary. From 1837 he bore the title of King of Portugal. Stockmar was, conjointly with the Coburg Minister, Von Carlowitz, charged with the negotiations for this matrimonial union, and with the settlement of the marriage contract, which was signed on December 6, at Coburg, where the Portuguese Plenipotentiary, Count Lavradio, the representative for many years of his country at the English Court, had arrived during the month of November.

This was the first great and ostensible act of the Coburg family policy, in which Stockmar took a prominent part; not only keeping in view the important political points and interests, but carefully considering and watching all that appeared to him as likely to secure the perfect success of the young Prince. Under this category came the assigning to the Prince of sufficient funds for his journey and his first arrival in Portugal, the choice of his attendants, the arrangements for his stay at the Belgian and English Courts, in order to prepare him gradually by

an attentive observation of great Courts, and by the advice and example of his Uncle Leopold, for his future position. Stockmar writes on December 23, 'The best opportunity for making acquaintance with really great society, with politics, and life as it is, is to be found in Brussels, for the near relationship of the young Prince to the Court, will smooth many difficulties in his first *début*. If the Queen of the French is to be in Brussels at the same time with some of her children, so much the better. The Prince can have no better example than this family, so admirably brought up, and it is politically important for him to make acquaintance with them. His *début* in London will be more difficult. But the impression he makes in England will precede him to Lisbon, and on it will partly depend the success he will meet with there. What England can and will give is this, a friendly reception at Court, an English man-of-war for the voyage to Portugal, and decided instructions to Howard de Walden (the Minister at Lisbon), for *bons offices*, assistance, and support.'

Many difficulties were made during the negotiations concerning the marriage contract, by the old Prince Ferdinand, the Prince's father, the most circumspect and cautious man. Not accustomed to political negotiations, he wished to make everything perfectly

secure, so that, in the precarious state of things in Portugal, his son should risk nothing. For instance, he demanded that England should guarantee the marriage contract. Stockmar found himself obliged to say that this was impossible, and, 'nothing venture nothing have.'

When at length the Plenipotentiaries signed the contract, they were very doubtful whether it would be ratified at Lisbon. Franco-Portuguese intrigues were at work against this marriage scheme, and in favour of a son of Louis Philippe. We will give some extracts from two letters, one from Stockmar, the other to him from Lord Palmerston.

Stockmar writes :—

'December 10, 1835.

'We were prepared by Lavradio for intrigues in Portugal against this marriage. He considers there would be endless difficulties in the way of a French Prince, and it is difficult to find anyone else.

'As for the French share in the intrigues, I don't doubt that Louis Philippe is aware of them. Whether he is so far in earnest that he would pursue his object at the risk of offending England, I cannot determine. I know, however, that after Leuchtenberg's death, the English Cabinet formally announced to the Portuguese, that a marriage with a French Prince would never receive the sanction of England.'

Lord Palmerston to Baron Stockmar.

'Foreign Office, December 18, 1835.

'My dear Baron,—Many thanks for your letter of the 9th, which gives me your view of the bridegroom and the marriage. Your account of the young Prince is sufficiently good. If he is tall and stoops a little it will be said he is only *condescending*, for the Portuguese are generally short, and he will be considered as studiously *inclined* to *give ear* to his subjects. However, joking apart, he belongs to a *good race*, and there can be no doubt of his turning out well, both morally and physically, and I think the Portuguese and their Queen are very fortunate in the choice which has been made. I shall write to Howard by to-day's mail, and instruct him to take the necessary steps for urging a ratification. He will put it to Loulé,[1] if there should be any hesitation, that he, Loulé, is specially and personally bound to have the contract ratified, because, if it was rejected, he being in the Government, all Europe would say he had broken off the match from interested views, and in order to favour the contingent and remote claims of his own children to the succession. But the matter has gone too far to admit of

[1] Marquis de Loulé, married to the youngest sister of Don Pedro: whose children were eventually entitled to succeed. He was then Portuguese Minister.

retractation on either side. As to the French match, I know not what to think. It is quite certain that the Loulé's and others in the interest and in the pay of Louis Philippe, did carry on an intrigue, which at one moment was successful, to persuade the Queen to declare in favour of Nemours, while at the same time Louis Philippe was solemnly assuring Granville[1] that such a proposal, if made, would not be accepted by him. That there was mystification, and intrigue, and trick somewhere or other is demonstrable, and that all this was at once put an end to by our unreserved declaration at Lisbon is equally certain. Who the parties were who planned the cabal, how far they meant to carry it, and what their ultimate objects were, it is impossible for us to know; but, if Louis Philippe's sentiments and intentions were really such as he declared them to be to Lord Granville, I do not see why he should take so much amiss the steps we took at Lisbon to prevent the future progress of a scheme which could only involve the Queen of Portugal in disappointment and discredit.

'My dear Baron, Yours sincerely,

'PALMERSTON.

'The Baron de Stockmar.'

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[1] The English Ambassador in Paris.

CHAPTER XVI.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE ACCESSION OF PRINCESS VICTORIA. PLAN FOR THE MARRIAGE WITH PRINCE ALBERT.

1836.

Preparations for the accession of the Queen—Plan for the marriage with Prince Albert—Different schemes of marriage—King Leopold's and Stockmar's opinions of Prince Albert—Stockmar's view of the task—How the Prince should be prepared for his eventual position—The two Coburg Princes at Brussels and Bonn—Princess Victoria approaches her majority, perhaps the throne—Necessity of a confidential adviser—Stockmar charged by King Leopold to go to England—Appendix—Prince Adalbert of Prussia sues for the hand of Princess Victoria—Letters of Lord William Russell to the Duchess of Kent—Answers of the Duchess.

THE year 1836 introduced Stockmar to a new sphere of activity at the English Court, in a double capacity. First, it had become necessary according to the views of her uncle, King Leopold, who never from her childhood lost sight of her welfare, to afford aid and council on the spot, to the Princess Victoria, at the approaching period of her attaining her majority, when her position would necessarily be an altered one; as well as at her accession to the throne, which could

no longer be far distant. Secondly, the King of the Belgians felt that the time had now arrived, to take the first serious steps for the execution of the plan determined upon by him, for the marriage of the heiress to the English throne, to his nephew, Prince Albert of Coburg.

Prince Albert was the second son of Ernest, reigning Duke of Coburg, eldest brother to the King of the Belgians. Born the 26th of August 1819, he was, in 1836, in his seventeenth year and only a few months younger than Princess Victoria. To speak of his early years after the interesting book, so full of authentic details, brought out under the eyes and the immediate direction of the Queen, would be a thankless undertaking. The clever and humorous grandmother, Duchess Augusta of Coburg, had, as appears from that biography,[1] at a very early date entertained the idea of a union between her grandson Albert and her granddaughter Victoria—the little May flower, as she was wont to call the little Princess, who had come into the world in the month of May. The Duchess died when they were both twelve years of age. Without doubt King Leopold had long had this project in view, but the first *written* notices of it which

[1] 'Early Years,' pp. 17 and 83.

we find in his correspondence with his confidant, Stockmar, are dated at the commencement of 1836, and serious discussions on the subject are not likely to have taken place much earlier. For it was clear that to have brought forward the plan, as long as the principal persons concerned were still children, would have been more likely to do harm than good. Now, however, it was high time to take the matter in hand; for in various quarters plans were being formed for the marriage of the Princess, now in her eighteenth year.

In the immediate circle of the Princess certain influences were at work in favour of the Duke Ernest of Wurtemberg, brother of Prince Albert's step-mother, the Duchess Maria, daughter of Duke Alexander of Wurtemberg, who had been in the Russian service. The King of England had a brother of the present King of the Netherlands in view, Prince Alexander, who died in 1848. In another portion of the Royal Family the idea of marrying the Princess to her cousin, Prince George of Cambridge, was favourably entertained. Later, several other projects of marriage were mooted. The Queen herself in the 'Early Years,' p. 215, adverts to six which were seriously thought of. In May 1837, Prince Adalbert of Prussia made an attempt, the corre-

spondence respecting which we shall give in an appendix to this chapter.

The following extracts from Stockmar's correspondence will show with how much forethought and method King Leopold and he went to work:

'The King of the Belgians,' writes Queen Victoria in a memorandum printed at p. 214 of the 'Early Years,' 'has lately given the Queen some of his letters, written to Baron Stockmar in the spring of 1836, to read; and it appears from them that he had early formed the highest opinion of his young, handsome, very amiable, and highly gifted nephew, Prince Albert; and that he had come to the happy conclusion that no Prince was so well qualified to make his niece happy, and fitly to sustain the arduous and difficult position of Consort to the Queen of England.'

Stockmar, who was less well acquainted with the Prince, was not so decided in his opinion. Even the Prince's own father, the Duke of Coburg, was at that time doubtful whether the elder brother, Ernest, the present reigning Duke, a Prince of a wholly different nature, would not be more suitable and more likely to please.

'Albert is a handsome youth,' writes Stockmar in a letter, 'who, for his age, is tolerably developed, with pleasant and striking features; and who, if nothing

interferes with his progress, will probably in a few years be a fine powerful man, with a pleasant, simple, and yet distinguished bearing. Externally, therefore, he has everything attractive to women, and what must please at all times, and in all countries. It may also be considered as a fortunate circumstance that he has already a certain English look about him.

'The only question, therefore, is in reference to his mind. And here, too, much is said in praise of him. But these are all verdicts more or less stamped with a party character, and, till I have had an opportunity of observing him for some length of time, I am not in a position to pass a judgment of my own upon his capacity and character. He is said to be prudent, cautious, and already very well informed. All this, however, does not yet suffice. He must not only have great capacity but true ambition, and a great strength of will. To pursue so difficult a political career a whole life through, requires more than strength and the wish to do it; for such a task is required that sustained earnestness which, as a matter of course, sacrifices mere pleasure to that which is truly useful. If the mere consciousness of filling one of the most influential positions in Europe does not satisfy him, how often will he feel tempted to repent

his adventure. If he does not, from the very first, undertake his new functions as a serious and difficult task, upon the thorough fulfilment of which his honour and happiness depend, he is not likely to succeed.

'Who can know so much of the secrets of such a career, who has thought so much on the subject and had so many experiences as I have? I will therefore watch him closely, and endeavour to become better acquainted with him. If I find that in all points there is sufficient "fond" in him, it becomes a matter of duty that the first step taken should be to explain to him all the difficulties of the undertaking. If this does not terrify him, then, in my opinion, two things require to be thought of. The first is, a well-planned system of education for his future career, with special reference to the peculiar land and people where he would be called upon to dwell; and the second is, that he should win the affection of the Princess before he asks her in marriage, and that his suit should be founded only on this sentiment of affection.'

A closer acquaintance with the Prince gave Stockmar the hope, that, both by his intellect and character, he would be suited to his high calling, and he repeatedly adverts in his letters to how and where Albert should be educated for it.

'Now,' he writes, 'is still the time in which sound

maxims, well inculcated, may last for ever. Now is still the time in which it is possible to learn, and in which, by honest and thorough teaching, an endless amount of good can be done, and an equal amount of evil be prevented. The Prince ought to receive the education which the consort of an English Queen requires. But where can he find this education? Where shall he be brought up? I am not prepared to receive as an answer to my question the possibility of his education being concluded in Coburg itself. Even if some persons could be there found who could educate the Prince, the petty circumstances of the place render every intercourse of the Prince with men who, by the independence of their position, could speak openly with him, impossible. Shall the Prince, therefore, be educated at Berlin, at Vienna, or at a German University?

'We will briefly consider what our young Prince could gain at Berlin. The principal point, a just appreciation of the present state of Europe, could hardly be acquired there. Prussia has attained her position among the European Powers more through fortunate circumstances, than through her own strength, and is still, in her policy, too much of the *parvenu*, who always over-estimates or under-estimates himself and others. Then, the position assumed

by her with respect to Germany is neither politic nor honourable. All this tends to form but a bad political school, and I cannot but believe that the Prince would, in Berlin, hear everything about politics except the truth. In a social point of view, too, the tone of Berlin is not to be recommended; at all events, for Princes, as it is so very affected. The subjects, therefore, on which Albert could there gain anything, are reduced to two—political administration and military organisation. On these points he might certainly learn much in Berlin, though I do not mean to say but that he could acquire what is needful in other places also. Besides this, a certain dissoluteness is as epidemic in Berlin as the influenza, and I believe that a youth could be kept from that evil in any other place more easily than in Berlin. Vienna, in my opinion, is not at all a suitable school for a German prince. There still remain the German Universities, but the education they can give is too one-sided and theoretical to suit the practical calling of a Prince.'

Stockmar proposed that the Prince, with his elder brother, should spend six months or a year in Brussels. They were to pursue their studies there under the superintendence of their uncle; but, in order to avoid being troublesome to him, they were to have a house of their own, with their own establishment. The insight

into the internal condition of Belgium; the favourable point of view for the observation of Europe politics afforded by neutral Brussels, which was not, however, itself too much separated from those politics; the valuable intercourse with their experienced, judicious, and clever uncle, always so ready to instruct them, and who was himself ever in the very midst of the great political questions of the day; all these were advantages which no other place united in offering.

'As to the objections,' writes Stockmar, 'which may be urged against Brussels, my opinion is this: Northern policy persists in looking on the Belgian kingdom as produced by the triumph of the principle of democracy. It will therefore doubtless be considered, that the stay of the young Princes in the capital of that kingdom is a proof of the intention to bring them up as ultra-Liberals. The possibility that this may, in the future, give rise to a feeling of animosity against the young Princes personally may be brought to bear as an argument against educating them in Brussels. But in as far as that animosity is unfounded, and arises only from mere hatred and prejudice against the Western Powers, I should not fear it.'

'An experienced statesman, if he had the choice of giving young princes instruction in politics, in a

constitutional kingdom, or in an absolute monarchy, would choose the former. Constitutional life has this great advantage, that the machinery and the course of everything lies open as the day. The dross of democracy is thrown up every moment to the surface, so that everyone can see it, lay hold of it, and, if he pleases, besmear himself with it. In the same sensible, tangible manner, the good is every moment brought to light. Anyone with eyes, or who is capable of receiving an impression, can see without effort, can remember without trouble.

'The organisation of pure monarchy is far less instructive. It is like simple, but concealed machinery, whose motion is hardly perceived, and whose defects first attract our attention when it goes stiffly, or altogether stops. Even if it were not our object to prepare the Prince specially for life in England, I should still prefer finishing his education in a constitutional country, as the more instructive. I also consider the art of constitutional government as far more difficult than that of a purely monarchical rule. And, therefore, even if the English prospects come to nothing, if circumstances hereafter allow the Prince to pursue the easier course, it can only help and not harm him to have learnt the more difficult.'

On April 16 Stockmar writes, 'Now is the right

moment for the first appearance in England. If the first favourable impression is now made, the foundation stone is laid for the future edifice.' He therefore advised the acceptance of an invitation from the Duchess of Kent to her brother, the Duke of Coburg, and his two sons. 'But,' he adds, 'it must be a "conditio sine quâ non" that the real intention of the visit should be kept secret from the Princess as well as the Prince, that they may be perfectly at their ease with each other.'

The Duke, therefore, with his two sons, arrived in England in May, and Victoria and Albert met for the first time. The 'impression' was made, though nothing was expressed on either side. After a stay of four weeks with their aunt, the Duchess of Kent, the Princes left, by way of Paris, for Brussels, where, in accordance with the plan mentioned above, they remained for the following ten months. For the account of their life there, we can refer to the 'Early Years,' p. 130, et seq.

In December 1836 Prince Albert writes to his former tutor, Dr. Seebode, Director of the Gymnasium (High School) at Coburg,[1] 'Our residence at Brussels will last till Easter. Where we shall then go in search

[1] 'Early Years,' p. 128.

of more wisdom, we do not yet know . . . . probably to some German university. To which? this is still undecided.'

It ended in the two Princes going to the University of Bonn, where they stayed from April 1837 to the end of 1838.

During this period Stockmar had to bestow his attention not on Prince Albert, but on his future wife.

The Princess Victoria attained her eighteenth year, and therefore her majority, on May 24, 1837. It was now necessary to give her greater independence, and a more enlarged sphere of activity than heretofore; and the nearer she now, by the King's age and state of health, seemed to be to the time when she would be called to the throne, the more reason was there to fear the schemes and intrigues of those who would exert all their power to entrap the almost isolated young Princess, hoping thus to rule the future Sovereign. Whenever the sceptre changed hands, it was to be apprehended that the compass might be wanting to so inexperienced a mariner. These circumstances were carefully weighed by the King of the Belgians and Stockmar. The King spoke to his niece the same year at Claremont, and it was arranged that in May 1837, from her eighteenth birth-

day, Stockmar should reside in England, as the trusty helper and adviser of the Princess.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVI.

Suit of Prince Adalbert of Prussia for the Hand of Princess Victoria.

With regard to this event, we give the letters that passed between Lord William Russell, the English Minister in Berlin, and the Duchess of Kent. The style of Lord William will amuse the reader; it would be difficult to imagine anything more laconic or more dryly business-like.

Lord William Russell to the Duchess of Kent.

'Berlin, May 3, 1837.

'Madam,—Would it be agreeable to your Royal Highness that Prince Adalbert of Prussia, the son of Prince William, should place himself on the list of those who pretend to the hand of H.R.H. the Princess Victoria?

'Your consent, Madam, would give great satisfaction to the Court of Berlin.

'I have the honour to be

'Your Royal Highness's obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) 'William Russell.'

The answer of the Duchess is characteristic of the attitude which she had assumed, as mother of the future Sovereign.

'Kensington Palace, May 8, 1837.

'My Lord,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd inst., asking me if it would be agreeable to

me that the Prince Adalbert of Prussia might be allowed to seek the hand of the Princess Victoria, and that my consent would give great satisfaction at the Court of Berlin. The undoubted confidence placed in me by the country, being the only parent since the Restoration who has had the uncontrolled power in bringing up the heir of the throne, imposes on me duties of no ordinary character. Therefore I could not, compatibly with those I owe my child, the King, and the country, give your Lordship the answer you desire; the application should go to the King. But if I know my duty to the King, I know also my maternal ones, and I will candidly tell your Lordship that I am of opinion that the Princess should not marry till she is much older. I will also add that, in the choice of the person to share her great destiny, I have but one wish—that her happiness and the interest of the country be realised in it.

'Believe me always to be,

'With great esteem, my Lord,

'Your Lordship's very sincere Friend,

(Signed) 'VICTORIA.'

Lord William answered thus:—

'Berlin, May 24, 1837.

'Madam,—I have received the letter your Royal Highness did me the honour to write to me. On informing Prince Wittgenstein[1] that your maternal feelings led you to think the Princess Victoria too young to marry, he said that the King of Prussia would, on learning your opinion, object to Prince Adalbert's projected journey to England.

'I beg to observe to your Royal Highness, that it was

[1] Minister of the royal house in Berlin.

only proposed to admit Prince Adalbert to the list of suitors for the hand of Princess Victoria, to which he was to win his claim by his character and personal attractions.

'I have the honour to remain

'Your Royal Highness's

'Obedient and devoted Servant,

(Signed) 'WILLIAM RUSSELL.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE YEAR FOLLOWING.

1837–1838.

Majority of the Princess—Arrival of Stockmar in England, May 25—Critical time between May 24 and the accession of Queen Victoria on June 20—Stockmar's position—Office of a private secretary of the Sovereign in England—Historical facts—Why the appointment of a private secretary did not seem advisable—How his place was supplied—Stockmar's office during the next fifteen months—Difficulties of his quasi-official position—His relation to Lord Melbourne—They differ on one point—One-sided party tendencies of the Court—Stockmar leaves England, August 1838.

On May 24, 1837, Princess Victoria attained her eighteenth year; on the 25th Stockmar arrived in England. King William had been taken so ill on the 20th, that serious apprehensions were entertained that he would not recover. He died on June 20.

In the period between her eighteenth birthday and her accession to the throne the young Princess had to struggle against great and unwonted difficulties. It fell to the lot of Stockmar to render her essential services at this critical juncture.

He remained in England for more than a year after the Queen's accession; that is, till August 1838. His external position was an undefined one. Circumstances would hardly have admitted of any other, nor would another have suited or satisfied him.

Erroneous impressions easily spread respecting a man who, without filling a public or recognised position, enjoys the confidence of Princes; especially when he is little known outside the immediate circle of the court in which his influence is exercised. All that the public knows is that such a one does exercise a certain influence, by what means and in what manner he exercises it, is not known. But the tendency of mankind to suspect something evil behind that which is a secret to them, appears irresistible. For those, therefore, who merely catch broken echoes from the sphere of the court, a man in a position such as that occupied by Stockmar at that time, easily gets the reputation of being a doubtful and dangerous character, a secret intriguer on the back stairs.

Against such insinuations Stockmar's memory is now guarded, by such testimony as that given in the book of Queen Victoria, and in such works as those of Juste on King Leopold and the statesmen of Belgium, Bunsen's 'Memoirs,' &c. Upon us devolves the task of describing the manner of his activity on

the delicate English terrain, and in the difficult period of the first years of Queen Victoria's reign.

German Sovereigns have so-called Cabinet Councillors. These, in the first place, work up the mass of affairs which are not of a political nature, and which have to be carried on by the Sovereign privately, and without the intervention of any public officer—the treatment, for instance, of petitions and the like. But, over and above this, they assist the Monarch in his public business, in so far as such business is not transacted by direct intercourse with the Ministers. They distribute into the proper channels such affairs as come before the head of the State, and have to be further worked up by the various departments. They prepare, by means of their reports and co-operation, the decisions of the Sovereign upon such subjects as the Ministers have submitted to the Crown, within such limits as the Sovereign may require at their hands. It is self-evident that a Cabinet Councillor of this kind can, according to the political state of the country and the individuality of the Sovereign, under favourable circumstances, become practically the real Minister.

In England the strictly political sphere of the Sovereign has long since been confined within narrow limits. But it is an entirely false notion to believe

that on that account the Sovereign is a mere nodding mandarin. It is true that the freedom of the Ministry is limited by Parliament, and that of the Sovereign by the Ministry; but nevertheless the latter maintains, under ordinary circumstances, in reference to his Ministers, a sphere of free decision and activity, which Stockmar used to describe by saying, that the King had it in his power, if endowed with the necessary capacity, to be his own Prime Minister. In certain extraordinary circumstances—as, for instance, in the case of a ministerial crisis or of a change of Ministers—the King appears upon the scene in a perfectly independent character, as regulator of the State machine. When King William, in November 1834, dismissed the Whig Ministry, the Duke of Wellington wrote to Sir Robert Peel[1] that, in his opinion, the new Ministers were not in any way responsible for the conflict of the King with their predecessors, as this was a matter which had been concluded before His Majesty sent for him (the Duke). Peel stated in reply that he was well aware that by his acceptance of office he became technically, if not morally, responsible for the dissolution of the preceding Government, although he had not had the remotest

[1] Peel's 'Memoirs,' vol. ii. p. 23.

concern in it. Todd[1] praises the more perfect correctness of Peel's view, inasmuch as a constitutional King cannot undertake any act of government, without some one being responsible for it. In those words of Peel, however, there is the distinct admission, that the responsibility of the new Ministry for the dismissal of the old one, was both morally and practically nonsense. They proved, moreover, how important in fact is the function of the Crown in a crisis of this kind. It appears from the above that the English Sovereign has an important sphere of political duty.

The kings before George III. did not employ Cabinet secretaries, or, as they are called in England, private secretaries. George III., narrow-minded, but with a strong sense of duty, and laborious, gave himself up personally to his royal vocation with great fidelity and perseverance, until in the year 1805 he became blind, when he appointed Colonel Herbert Taylor to be his private secretary, paying his salary out of funds at the disposal of the Crown.

This arrangement was looked upon at the time by many politicians with disfavour, but regard for the King prevented any open attack being made. When

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[1] 'Parliamentary Government,' p. 124.

later the Prince Regent named Colonel MacMahon as his secretary, and wished to have his salary paid out of the public funds, he was forced by the opposition which manifested itself in Parliament, to desist from the latter demand, and to provide the payment out of the privy purse. The appointment itself was attacked in Parliament. It was highly unconstitutional, said the opponents of the measure, that the secrets of the State should pass through a third party, besides the King and Ministers, and that a private secretary should, as it were, constitute a court of revision above the Cabinet. The Ministers nevertheless defended the appointment. The Regent, they said, required the services of a secretary, to assist him in his private correspondence, and to get through the mass of mechanical labour which devolved upon the Crown, in connection with the transaction of public business.[1] Moreover, the private

[1] According to the English system, the Sovereign has to furnish an untold mass of signatures. If, therefore, he has a secretary who regularly submits the documents for signature, and further transmits these documents, when signed, to their respective destinations, this alone causes an important diminution of the labour. It was not until 1862 that an Act of Parliament considerably diminished this portion of the present Sovereign's labour, by freeing her from the necessity of herself signing all the commissions for the army and navy. In the year 1862 the Queen was still occupied with signing commis-

secretary had no political responsibility, and his office in no way interfered with the duties or responsibilities of any minister. The Ministers of the Crown remain the legal and constitutional organs by means of which all public business has to be transacted. The motion of the Opposition was, then, lost, and the Prince kept his private secretary.

William IV. appointed his father's former secretary Sir Herbert Taylor, as his own, and the Ministers allowed this arrangement to be made unchallenged, although they might have said to themselves, that such a secretary must necessarily be initiated in all the affairs, and could have the ear of the King on any and every subject, and be in a position to exercise very considerable influence within the limits assigned to the King's activity.

Upon the accession of Queen Victoria the appointment of a private secretary appeared undesirable. By not naming anyone to the post, it was easier to avoid all the possible intrigues which would have arisen for the filling of this position. But, in addition to this, it must have appeared both to the Ministry and to the Queen's uncle, King Leopold, each from their own point of view, a hazardous undertaking to entrust a

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sions of the year 1858, and the arrears amounted to nearly 16,000.

youthful, and, as regarded affairs, altogether inexperienced Sovereign, to the hands of any single man so placed, whose influence might have become all the more extensive the more he was exempt from all control. It was therefore determined that the Queen should formally have no private secretary.

Practically, the assistance that the Queen required, and which a private secretary is in the habit of affording, was distributed amongst persons already in the Queen's service and of proved fidelity.

The former governess and lady companion to the Princess, Baroness Lehzen,[1] had retained the care of the purely personal affairs; and, as in such things it is

[1] Louise Lehzen, daughter of a Hanoverian clergyman, first appeared in England in the year 1818, as governess to the Princess Feodora of Leiningen, a daughter by the first marriage of the Duchess of Kent. In 1824 she entered on the same functions as regards the Princess Victoria, but, on account of her being a foreigner, without the title of sub-governess, which would have corresponded to her functions. George IV. raised her in 1827, at the request of Princess Sophia (daughter of George III., born 1777, died unmarried 1848), to the rank of Hanoverian Baroness. She was now, as a matter of form, placed about the Princess provisionally, and, until the age of the Princess made some other arrangements necessary, as lady in attendance. She maintained this position from 1831, with the practical functions of sub-governess, until the Queen's accession under the Duchess of Northumberland, who in that year had been appointed governess. After the Queen's accession she remained till the year 1842 at Court, as the Queen's friend. She then retired to Germany, where she died in 1870.

difficult to draw a line, and still more difficult to keep to it when drawn, circumstances led to her having a part of the non-political affairs, and therefore of the non-political correspondence, which a private secretary would have attended to.

In regard to the affairs of State, properly speaking, the functions of a private secretary were in part replaced by the Premier, Lord Melbourne, who gave himself up in a far greater degree than a Premier is wont to do, to personal intercourse with the Queen. In consequence of this he took a considerable share in the discussion of the non-political affairs of the Queen.

But even thus there remained a gap, inasmuch as it was not everything that could be settled in the way of direct intercourse, either written or verbal, between the Queen and the Ministers, especially between the Queen and the Premier. It was necessary in such cases that there should be a go-between, especially at first, when so many matters wholly new and unknown to the Queen, came on for discussion. This gap was for fifteen months filled up by Stockmar. But in addition to this, owing to his relations to King Leopold, her uncle, he was naturally a confidential adviser who could be consulted when occasion required, upon the higher personal interests of

the Queen, and matters of importance connected with the Court. In addition to this, Stockmar's duty to King Leopold made it incumbent upon him to observe with attention everything which could affect the well-being of the King's niece.

Stockmar's clear insight made him carefully avoid every interference with English affairs of State. Had he so interfered he would have acted in direct opposition to the opinion of King Leopold, who employed him, and would have at once rendered his position in England impossible. That he had nevertheless many opportunities of obtaining an insight into State affairs, and yet never excited the suspicions or jealousy of the English Ministry, was the result of the good personal relations in which he stood to some of the most prominent members of the Administration, and more particularly to the Premier, Lord Melbourne, who had been very much in favour of Stockmar's coming over to England; and with Lord Palmerston, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. They appreciated his ability as well as his character, and reposed the utmost confidence in his cautiousness, discretion, reliability, and unselfishness. 'Lord Melbourne,' writes the Queen herself in the 'Early Years,' p. 188, 'had the greatest regard and affection for, and the most

unbounded confidence in him.[1] At the commencement of the Queen's reign the Baron was of invaluable assistance to Lord Melbourne.' Of Lord Palmerston Bunsen relates the following anecdote: The remark had been made how seldom it was that a wholly disinterested action was met with in political men; to which Palmerston observed, 'I have never but once met a perfectly disinterested man of this kind, and that is Stockmar.'

It is true that a confidential person of this kind may now and then indirectly exercise an influence over affairs, with which it is neither his duty nor his desire to interfere; and where the confidence reposed is not limited to certain special objects, such a person may at times be called upon to express directly an opinion upon affairs of this kind. But even in this direction Stockmar caused no anxiety to an enlightened man like Lord Melbourne, who took men and things as he found them. One day the Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Abercromby, declared to the Premier that he felt that it would be his duty to call attention in Parliament to the uncon-

[1] According to a letter still in existence, Lord Melbourne said of him to the Queen, 'Stockmar is not only an excellent man, but also one of the most sensible I have ever met with.'

stitutional position of that foreigner Stockmar. Melbourne replied that Stockmar was a person who filled a gap caused by circumstances in certain relations, with his (Melbourne's) knowledge and approval. Lord Melbourne related the circumstance later to Stockmar, who exclaimed, 'Tell Abercromby to bring forward his motion against me in Parliament; I shall know how to defend myself.' The Speaker, however, remained quiescent. It must nevertheless be admitted that Stockmar's presence, by giving rise to many false rumours, occasionally caused the Minister, though he placed the fullest confidence in him, a certain uneasiness which it is not difficult to understand. On one occasion he gave expression to this feeling in the following words: 'King Leopold and Stockmar are very good and intelligent people, but I dislike very much to hear it said by my friends that I am influenced by them. We know it is not true, but still, I dislike to hear it said.'

Lord Melbourne, then in his fifty-eighth year, was an old man of the world, somewhat sceptical, as his like are wont to be, but honourable, well-meaning, honest, clever, highly educated, and a moderate Liberal. His principal faults were indolence and carelessness, and a want of initiative and firmness. Stockmar often

designated him with the nickname of the Pococurante. Lord Melbourne was strongly devoted to the Queen, and even warmly attached to her personally. He initiated her in public affairs in the most easy and kindly manner. She, on the other hand, placed in him an almost filial confidence. On one point, however, Stockmar was not agreed with Melbourne, and had many a dispute with him thereon. He found in him too great an inclination to yield to party interests. This did not in any way arise from any violent political passion on the part of Melbourne, but he gave in too readily to the wishes of his supporters, and was too careless, not at times to overlook in the momentary advantage which a measure might bring to the Whigs and the Ministry, the possible lasting damage it might inflict upon the Queen and the Crown. Instead of impressing upon his illustrious pupil, the great maxim, that she was Queen of the entire people, and that it was her duty to hold herself free from the bonds of any party, he contributed by sins, partly of omission, partly of commission, to her attitude assuming the appearance of her being only Queen of the Whigs, not to say of that particular fraction of the Whigs, who just then happened to be in power.

With that noble candour and fearless honesty which

distinguish the Queen, she herself acknowledges in the 'Early Years,' pp. 276 and 327, that 'up to the period of her marriage she had indulged strong feelings of political partisanship.' The greater share of blame falls to Lord Melbourne, as after her marriage, and after the fall of the Whig Ministry, the Queen adopted a totally different course. It is generally difficult for women to be perfectly impartial, and it could hardly be expected, that so young a Princess, should offer much resistance to the tendency to identify herself more and more with the Whigs, this tendency being partly promoted, partly tolerated, by so friendly, so intimately trusted a Mentor as Lord Melbourne. This exclusive feeling for the Whigs showed itself principally in the appointments at Court, and in a decided neglect of the Tories in invitations and social civilities.

Later on, this prejudiced exclusiveness came to show itself now and then more palpably, in purely political matters. It was the more dangerous because the Whig Ministry, weak externally and inwardly, could inspire no awe in the Opposition. The evil consequences were palpably evident in the course of the following year, and attained their full height in 1839, the year before the Queen's marriage.

Before this, in the summer of 1838, Stockmar had left England. He had already undertaken a new task, of which we shall treat in the next chapter. It was connected with the project of marriage for the Queen.

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